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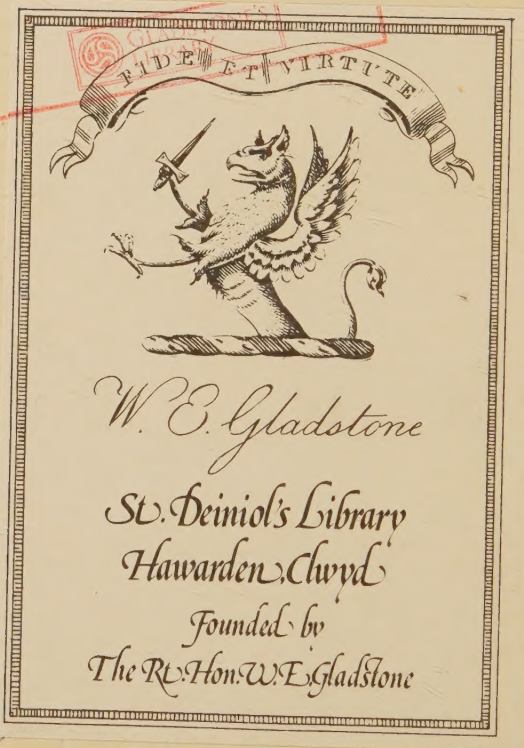

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A WANDERER'S WAY

BY

CHARLES E. RAVEN, D.D.

CANON OF LIVERPOOL AND CHAPLAIN TO THE KING

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TO

MY GUIDES AND COMPANIONS

PARTICULARLY

S. H. HARE

J. H. A. HART

AND

F. N. PIERCE

PREFACE

THIS book ought not to have been published: that is what the reviewers will say, and therefore for those who read no further I put their verdict here. Perhaps they are right: I sometimes feel inclined to think so. No one likes to give himself away.

Its history is its excuse. Two years ago a friend said to me, 'You feel about Jesus just as you do about your birds.' The remark lay in the back of my mind; suddenly popped up into consciousness; and took shape as a desire to write what the family called a 'Bird-book about God.' It seemed to me that religion is not less natural and much more universal than the love of birds, and that it is important for us to realise this. If a beginner in ornithology could not but share his experiences for the joy of it, surely a beginner in discipleship might do the same. The desire became a passion with me: a few weeks' leisure were available: a start was made: and the book took shape in the writing of it.

If it has any merit as a human document or as attempting to explain how a young man of the twentieth century came to certain experiences and certain convictions, its purpose will have been served. Others far better qualified, far more rich

in the knowledge of God, will see and pity my ignorance, and will perhaps break through the reserve which makes such a story hard to tell, and show us what they have learnt and think of the Christ. There is no other subject so well worth describing, no other of such vital interest for each one of us and for the world.

We are always being told that religion must be restated in terms not of metaphysical dogma but of personal experience; and certainly such experience will be a principal datum for an inductive theology. But so long as the Victorian convention that men keep their religion to themselves holds good, evidence as to the best thing in the world is hard to obtain. If I had had the privilege of meeting Thomas Hardy, it would not have been improper or egoistic for me to share what I knew of him with others; indeed to do so would have been a duty. Surely the same applies to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He is the subject of this book just as birds were of its predecessors.

That, being what I am, I am ashamed to write of Him, is obvious. If this record says little of the struggles and sins, the moral and intellectual failures of its author, his silence is not due to ignorance of them or desire to conceal them. They are, after all, dull and unimportant. Religion looks upward to God not downward to oneself: Jesus is the Lord of health: joy rather than penitence is the attitude of the Christian. He has not learned much if he has not found God more interesting than his own soul.

The story would have been, in places, easier to read if the names of those who influenced it had

been mentioned. It was necessary to write with frankness of praise and blame ; to introduce living people except anonymously would have been an outrage ; to invent pseudonyms would bring in an element of fiction. A friend, after a harrowing experience, once told me that he felt as if he were standing stark naked in a room full of women : this book makes me feel exactly as he did ; I cannot involve others in so acute an embarrassment.

Why then inflict such an indecency upon the public ? The reason that compels it will be plain. Everywhere we hear pleas for a deeper realisation of the indwelling Christ : but on examination such pleas leave us uncertain as to the character of the experience that we are invited to share. Is Jesus alive now as He appeared to be to St. Paul ; and, if so, can ordinary folks like me, full of fears and vanities, folks living commonplace lives in modern surroundings, have contact with Him ? Or is the indwelling of Christ just a title for the acceptance of an example or a body of principles, visualised objectively in more primitive times, but nowadays rightly stripped of associations that belong only to abnormal sensibilities or an over-active imagination ? This book seeks to supply material for a verdict, or at least to get the matter discussed.

To Mr. G. S. Williams I have been for years under a great obligation. He read the first draft of this record in manuscript, and his criticisms and encouragement have been invaluable : mere thanks are inadequate to express my gratitude to him.

C. E. R.

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I. SCHOOL-DAYS

'Forth-steppers from the latent unrealised baby-days'

In an age when child psychology is familiar even among nurse-maids, and big books and still bigger novels analyse for us the religion of our infancy, it is interesting to look back and compare with these elaborate discourses our own vague memories. We are continually told not only that the home is the training-ground of character, but also that our quality is fixed for us in the first four (or is it seven?) years. It is usually easy enough for a biographer to point to some anecdote of his hero's infancy as foreshadowing his future career. If I had become a servant of the State, I could ascribe my destiny to the influence of the first Jubilee: for my earliest memory is of the tents in Kensington Gardens and the sellers of flags and souvenirs in the streets, when I was approaching my second birthday. Had I been an explorer, I should recall my first crime, a voyage of discovery in my best bib and tucker and on hands and knees into the coal-cellar. Lawyer or doctor, artist or sportsman, all of these I could justify as my calling. Being a parson, psychologists will get few premonitory symptoms from me. Religion, in its

formal sense, is associated with no early reminiscences, and my first vivid impression of it came to me, as I suspect it comes to most of us, in a form quite different from what was intended.

How far, indeed, can we as parents or teachers mould the young life according to our desire? We aim, and rightly, at creating definite impressions in an atmosphere of trust and gaiety, a serious purpose in life, a bent in this or that direction. But the elusive object of our care selects whimsically and independently what it will remember and what forget. On the whole our plans may be successful and our prayers answered: but anyone who believes that environment is the sole determinant of character should study his own babyhood, and ask whether these were the influences that parents or pedagogues were trying to produce. When folks talk as if the child could be fashioned like a wax doll according to the taste of its teachers, I for one wonder and doubt. It is our task to offer all we can of beauty and health and wise affection: is it in our power to decide which of all the myriad choices will be taken?

Certainly my own first impression of God in any clear sense was one that was outside my mother's purpose. She had given me a child's belief that I was protected by another arm and watched by other eyes than hers. The assurance was an indefinite comfort: for I was nervous and then, as always, a coward. Dark corners on the stairs or strange noises in the chimney filled me with terror, and sometimes, though God was not so real as bears and burglars, I could set Him against them. My mother certainly taught me that

the All-seeing Eye was kindly: my nurse occasionally appealed to it in the interest of discipline: but there was no reason at home why I should have learned the terror of the Lord. It was only when religion led on to church-going that God became an object of dread, and a few well-intentioned sentences precipitated the shapeless awe of the numinous into an acute horror of a very definite tyrant. The children's service was taken by the curate, impressive in his strange robes, and overwhelming as he warned us of the certainty and the pains of hell. Perhaps it was part of his creed; perhaps he merely found us tiresome and wanted to frighten us into better behaviour. But I was just beginning to wonder about life, and his words produced a reaction out of all proportion to their worth.

The wrath of God eclipsed His love at once. Up till then my daily prayers had been a simple and not unpleasant ritual, a duty like brushing one's teeth, which was done without being understood, and done partly for mother's sake, partly for the sense of mystery that stirred the small soul, but hardly aroused curiosity or emotion. With the coming of fear came taboos. God was jealous for His rights; prayers were a propitiation; they must be said exactly and to perfection. I can see myself now shivering in the dark as I tried over and over again to repeat the familiar phrases without a flaw: a lump in my throat and all was to do again; a sneeze and the rite was spoiled. And the curate would not let bad alone. He must tell us of the awful trials that awaited the 'pi' (I can hear him use the horrid word now) in their school-time, the

jeers and torments. Life was a grim business. If you were irreligious, it was hell hereafter; if devout, hell on earth and then a heaven almost equally unpleasant. We sang 'Jerusalem, my happy home' every Sunday; and like Mr. C. E. Montague, I disliked celestial jewelry and the prospect of an everlasting concert almost as much as endless flames. Mansions in the sky were a very poor substitute for our little house in Paddington. Surely the good man did not know how his discourses affected the morbid imagination of the small urchin who sat so silent half-way down the nave. And yet his casual words made a deeper impression than most others. We learnt the weekly collect and the catechism at school, and had morning prayers, and when time permitted a glorious piece of beautiful but irrelevant scripture. Years afterwards I discovered that it was the 121st psalm—and have loved the psalms ever since: but at the time the Lord stood to me for punishment not for help, and was represented by the clergy and the church, not by my parents or school.

And along with these memories is another less definite. Religion, like God, had always been mysterious and unearthly. I never felt that the church quite belonged to this world, or that the parson was human, although he sometimes came to tea. And it was a real shock to me to discover that choir-boys wore boots and stockings just like my own, instead of sandals like the children in the stained-glass windows. It would not have surprised me if they had had wings under their surplices. God made the birds and flowers; He made

me and the universe : but though my mother told me when I was ten and beginning to study natural history that I need not take the first chapters of Genesis literally, I never felt that creation was anything but an act, or that the Deity had any close contact with what He had brought into being. God made me, and then watched how I behaved : and one day He would call me to account. And Jesus—Jesus loved lambs and lilies and sparrows and little children : but I was none of these—does a child ever think of himself as a child ?—and it was all far away and long ago ; and though the pictures were beautiful, the story had scourging and a cross in it ; and I hated pain. And there were birds in the museum and sometimes butterflies in the park, and a fascinating taxidermist with a humming-bird in his window, and several poulterers' shops, and bus tickets to collect, and lists of train numbers to keep, and cricket scores in summer, and Greek to begin, and Latin verses to puzzle over, and all the multitude of wonderful things to see and do. No wonder religion only mattered at intervals. Life was too exciting to leave much time for hell. Orthodoxy had already become unreal.

Besides this, other people seemed to get along comfortably. My mother cared about God : somehow one's mother naturally would : her life was saturated with religion, and though she said little its influence upon her was infective. She went to church when she was well enough ; I liked going with her, and her faith was far stronger than I knew. But my father seldom went, except in the holidays ; and though I sometimes wondered

about him, it seemed as if he didn't need it; he never talked about such things, but his opinion of parsons had been formed at a very 'high-church' school, and was not, I fear, too complimentary. Religion could hardly matter as enormously as the clergy claimed if its effects were not more evident. People were nice or nasty, quite irrespectively of their churchmanship; and some of the most religious were obviously unpleasant, fussy and irritable and inquisitive and far too interested in one's faults. Gradually the dread of God was forgotten: His existence hardly counted; and though there was still mystery and sometimes, at the sight of a moth emerging from its pupa or of the patterned feathering of a bird, wonder and admiration, He dwelt apart. The religion of the church and the spiritual quality of home life belonged to different worlds: the conflict between institutionalism and the wider vision may be said to have begun in those early days.

It is not easy to summarise the dominant influences of the years before I went away to school. Probably the facts that we were always poor, that my mother was never strong, and that I nearly died of diphtheria at the age of nine gave me from the first a sense that life was a serious business and emphasised the elements of struggle and pain. The sacrifices that my parents made for the education of the three of us, the courage with which they accepted conditions far more straitened than those of their earlier days, the comradeship between us all, living as we did in a small house and with very few distractions, the zest in simple pleasures and the discovery of the interest of common things,

such experiences taught us not only to 'suffer hardness,' but to realise that after all money has very little relation to worth or happiness. My mother had the artist's passion for beauty in nature and literature : I was never so happy as in watching her paint or hearing her read. My father had been brought up in New Zealand, was a keen sportsman, and loved to talk of old days in the colony or at Cambridge : every morning he and I would walk to my day-school on his way to the Temple, furbishing up my home-work or discussing the news in the paper ; and on Sundays there was always a visit to the park or when friends gave us tickets to the Zoo. Both parents made friends with us children, and encouraged us to enquire into and argue over books and ideas : both were singularly independent in outlook, free from all envy and ambition, looking with amusement upon the vulgarities of the merely rich, and content with a small circle of friends chosen quite irrespective of social position.

One small incident may illustrate the quality of our home-life. My father, from the time when I was seven, had done Latin with me at breakfast, and until I went to a day-school lessons with my mother had occupied the morning. After my tenth birthday one fateful morning the master presented me with a Greek grammar and told me to learn the alphabet for preparation. I ran off home (it was my daily amusement to race one of the old horse-omnibuses over the mile between home and school), torn between pride and fear, anxious to boast to my sister of my new accomplishment, but dismayed at the strange script. Bursting into the

room where my mother was lying ill I found her with a copy of the same grammar, and a working knowledge of its first pages : she had spent the day learning it up so as to help me over my task. Children are apt to take their parents' care for granted. I had never realised before what self-sacrifice meant, or known the strange mingling of wonder and joy that brings tears to the eyes and a glow of gratitude to the heart. It was all so unexpected and undeserved ; and I had been so frightened ; and now the old comradeship was not to come to an end, and I was not to be left alone. Nowadays the friendship between parents and children has become almost general, and is indeed one of the happiest features of our time. A generation ago the old and more formal ways were still usual. Those of us who escaped them have surely great cause for thankfulness. If only I had known that this, and not the curate's torture-chamber, was Christianity ! But for me God and Christ were associated with Sundays and church-going, and stood for rebuke not for love, for discipline not for fellowship. Most of us love father and mother and our home on earth : most of us, I suspect, grow up secretly disliking our Father in heaven and with no desire at all for Jerusalem and its streets of gold.

If religion in the narrower sense did not play a large part in our family life, we learnt things far more important than piety or orthodoxy. To keep cheerful in dismal surroundings and poor health ; to be indifferent to public opinion and quick to discern pretentiousness ; to value real friends more than popularity, and integrity more

than success; to walk miles for the saving of a bus-fare, and the sake of the home-exchequer; to find interest in shop-windows instead of theatres, and in Kensington Gardens instead of the Alps; to be encouraged to read good books and enjoy good talk, making the best of what would seem to many very limited opportunities; this is to sift out the real values of life from the myriad foolish and irrelevant aims to which men too often give their energies. 'Plain living and high thinking' may be a copy-book maxim: I never heard it in those days or except on the lips of the affected, but I grew up under conditions which could be so described, and am glad that it was not otherwise. If I knew little about God, I was at least saved from many an idolatry and learned to appreciate the fruit of His spirit, courage in adversity, humour in defeat, pleasure in beauty and knowledge and honesty of purpose, and love for common things and ordinary people. And underlying our silence about religion was a delicacy and a reverence which fostered a sense of its sacredness and probably prevented me from dismissing it later with a shrug or a sneer.

Donald Hankey, and others from Dickens onward, have given us inimitable pictures of the cockney, of his precocious development, his alertness of observation, his humour and quickness of repartee, his sensitiveness and dread of pain, his vanity and grumbling, his affection for his pals, his contempt of his neighbours. I was born within sound of Bow Bells, and would fain think myself an almost typical Londoner. My mother was born in Liverpool and brought up at Winwick;

my father played cricket for Sussex and spent his life on the south-eastern circuit: they gave me a love of the country quite foreign to the cockney. But by habit I am a townsman, who would care less for the slob-lands and the cliffs if he did not care even more for the bustle of the streets and the beauty of their lamps 'shining double in the wet.' The inquisitiveness, the unrest, the passion of the dwellers in great cities, these are native to me; and though at times there comes a yearning for a ruminant or vegetable existence, my wife is certainly right when she answers my complaints with: 'My dear, you would be bored to death in a month.'

It was not till I was thirteen that I left home and London and was plunged into a public school. At first the change had little effect. It was all strange and full of pitfalls: but being nurtured on *Tom Brown* I had been so frightened beforehand that its novelty was rather bewildering than terrible. Cowards may die many times before their deaths: I suspect death when it comes is for them unexpectedly easy. At least the place was utterly unlike the Rugby of Arnold's day. People were kind—on the whole: I was neither bullied nor seriously ragged; the work was not hard; the country was delightful. The first few terms went quickly and happily. Indeed I felt like a changeling who had dropped into a queer world of topsy-turvydom where nothing was quite intelligible but everything could, with luck, be endured and might even be enjoyed. I still wake up sometimes with a shudder to recollect how often and unconsciously I danced on the edge of a moral precipice,

how utterly I misunderstood the life around me, how naively I carried the customs of my home into a place where many of its interests were taboo and all its sanctities profaned.

For two years I was in the school, though not in any real sense of it. Then I ceased to be a sojourner and found my place in the community. Of those later years it is less pleasant to write. There are from them a few bright memories—an occasional innings at cricket, random glimpses of wider interests, friendships that lasted for a month or so with boys who shared my keenness for birds and insects, a master or two who gave hints of knowledge and willingness to share it. But on the whole I hated it; and as I grew the hatred settled into a steady ache of loneliness and fear. So strong is the pain of it still that when a few weeks ago a good bishop in my hearing informed a boys' school that they were spending the happiest years of their lives, I could hardly not call him a liar to his face. Of course he was wrong both in fact and in theology, though his remark would be passed by many as a platitude. At least for me, and I think for most others, there is no time that I would less gladly have again.

It was my own fault—but not altogether. I was shy, and so people thought me conceited; keen about ideas, with not a soul to talk to; weak and weedy in a school crazy for athletics; passionately fond of nature, and never allowed to study her; eager for friendship, but never finding a friend; fastidious about sex in an atmosphere loud with indecency. Put it otherwise: a prig, a prude, a book-worm, a bug-hunter, who is no

good at football and has on occasion a sarcastic tongue, is not likely to be popular. And probably his wretchedness is not only well earned but in the long run not unwholesome. It is good, up to a point, for those who are blessed or cursed with brains to get the pride knocked out of them: and in my case the breaking-point was just not reached. Others of similar type were less fortunate. For me the wounds are old scars now: but the marks are still too sensitive to touch.

At this point every woman and many men will murmur 'What rubbish,' more or less politely; and will add that such an account is morbid and untrue. In doing so they will be mistaken, though their mistake is natural enough. No woman, not even the mother who bore him, has a true idea of a boy's real thoughts and feelings at adolescence, or any accurate knowledge of the inner life of a school. Sometimes, years afterwards, she may discover something of her son's struggles, his fears and doubts and dreams and joys when he first plunged into what Stevenson calls the 'lost fight of virtue': and then she is horrified to learn that his letters home and his conduct in the holidays reflected only the self with which he faced the world. The men who look back upon their school-days with rapture are mostly those whose shells have hardened with time, who have taken life superficially and become content with its material satisfactions, and who cannot remember that they were ever sensitive or conscience-stricken or lonely. Or else they are those rare souls who grow up simply and without introspection, large, healthy, happy children whose

pleasures and passions have about them an utter innocence, 'A music that seems never to have known Dismay nor hate nor wrong,' and for whom school was a joyous prelude to a life-time unperplexed and unafraid. The majority of men are not of these types, and they, if they are honest, will admit that the glamour of the passage from child to man is, if not a comfortable fiction, at least a bare half of the truth.

If my own experience is not typical, it is far nearer the average than the picture painted and re-painted by the authors of 'tales of school-life.' *Tom Brown* set the fashion, and that immortal work was written by one of the simplest and 'whitest' men in the world. Hughes, if anyone, was the schoolboy hero, the child who never grew up, and his book, even if its episodes are exaggerated, is a true product of his character. As such it has been followed by a mighty army of imitators: take a juvenile athlete as your chief ingredient, add a wit, a bully, a persecuted fag, an awkward scholar, a faithful friend, a dangerous rival, and a batch of distorted pedagogues; mix them up in an atmosphere of genial romanticism; insert a smoking scandal, a fight, a cribbing scene, sundry rags, and a house-match or two; bring them all to the boiling point when the hero scores the winning try or does the hat-trick; serve the whole hot, and with a title associating the dish with an establishment which the initiated can identify; and the suburbs will raid the libraries for the result.

One or two notable efforts, like those of Dean Farrar or Mr. Kipling, have been made to break

the tradition ; and Mr. Walpole, despite conventional incidents, has solved the psychological problem by confining his story to the events of a single term. But such protests are in vain. The succession continues unimpaired ; and the great public sees its youth represented by an image about as like the reality as the Apollo Belvidere is to you and me ; it sees and follows the cult.

Of course neither authors nor readers are to blame. A novel, if it is to sell, must be dramatic, full of clear-cut events or clear-cut characterisation. School life has little drama in its narrow range of action ; but it gives still less scope for the interplay of personalities. Its real story would be of the inward not the outward, and of chaos not character, a record of obscure and confused motives, of quickly-changing relationships, of ideals unrelated to experience, of struggles that are tragic without dignity, and woes at once pathetic and ridiculous. Its heroes are turbid and yeasty, capable alike of meanness and exaltation, of loyal enthusiasm and impish lusts, full of affectations and disillusionments, possessed neither of the simplicity of children nor the stability of men. To reduce such chameleon creatures to the primary colours demanded by the story-teller, or to bring their inconsistencies into the scheme of a coherent plot, is impossible : they do not know their own hue or task ; from day to day they are made new and find new outlooks upon life. And the result is an ebb and flow of emotions uncontrolled by knowledge or settled ideas as they journey on through a tangle of fresh experiences, aspiring,

lonely, excited, ashamed, rebellious. A novel demands a pattern : here is nothing but the random convolutions of a kaleidoscope.

Remember that in those years of his schooling not only is the child discovering every day strange powers and devices in himself, and a welter of novelties in the world around him, but he is facing for the first time the most acute problems of personal and corporate life. Grown men find perplexity enough when a conflict of loyalties makes havoc of their peace of mind, when conscience and interest, principles and popularity are at war within them. The boy is flung into a little world where hour by hour he has to learn the unfamiliar art of adjusting himself to conflicting forces. The memory of his home, the lure of his companions, his obligation to the school, his need for self-expression, how is he to reconcile these, or to fashion them into consistent conduct, when the whole stuff of his nature is plastic and there is no solid core that resists the pull of circumstance ? He lives from day to day, fretted by his inability to range himself, and yet rejoicing in the experiment of existence, unconscious of the effect which each new adventure will have upon him. We, who look back, can see how this and that event, this trivial friendship, that casual deed, formed the man ; we cannot set down a true picture of ourselves while the formative process was at its zenith ; and when we write of schoolboys we throw back into their story the settled habits and defined personalities of the adult. Here and there, may be, are boys who keep through life the clarity of childhood, or boys prematurely virile

who seem to have been born adult, or boys dominated by a single ideal who suffer martyrdom rather than surrender it; but the vast majority of them is changing so rapidly and so completely that they are conscious of little but the great moments of triumph or of shame, and of the general pains that accompany growth.

If schools and school-days were my theme there would be more to say. Even now the notion that the boy who is good at games is necessarily moral dies hard. There are still places of education where 'Send the boys to bed tired, and you'll have no trouble' is the house-master's motto. There will always be pundits who think that they know what is going on at the dark side of a boy's mind, and others who dare not be human or friendly lest they encourage presumption. But all schools are not as mine was at the opening of the century; and anyhow my concern is with religion and not pedagogics. So let it pass.

It was, I think, religion that I wanted, though at the time I should have denied it with vigour. And religion never came my way. As a treble I sang in the choir, enjoyed the chapel services, and listened to the sermons but without understanding. We learned our scripture lessons: 'names of Jewish kings' were more familiar to me then than now. And in the Sixth there was an hour a week with St. Paul, and 'Sunday Questions' of fearsome difficulty to be searched out in the library. The result was a rather intimate knowledge of the Greek of the Epistles; a close acquaintance with the use of prophecy in the early Church and with the identity of Silas and Luke; and a general

conviction that the New Testament was a strange enigma, rather ungrammatical, crude in style, archaic in ideas, totally irrelevant to the twentieth century. My headmaster was writing a book on the Christian Prophets, and took us into bypaths of scholarship: he never read the Gospels with us, or if he did the memory of it has departed: I think they were studied in English lower down in the school, and we were supposed to have done them. Only one member of the staff ever mentioned religion to me unofficially or gave me the least impression that it mattered to him: and my chance of appreciating him was spoiled by a colleague who remarked in my hearing: 'P. is always digging up his boys' souls to see how they smell!'

Confirmation—yes, it came at sixteen, and the actual service thrilled me to the core. I sat down afterwards and wrote to my mother that I meant to be a missionary; and for the time my whole being was solemnised and cheered. But the preparation for it was enough to justify all that has been written to the discredit of 'public school religion.' It was, of course, based on the Catechism: the church still uses it, and I can only say that it needs revision rather more than even the Athanasian Creed. Picture us then, half a dozen assorted youths, very shy of one another and of the master: he shared our embarrassment, heard us our portion, and then dictated an ethical commentary upon it. The Ten Commandments—and a languid interest as he slurred over adultery; the 'duties'—as if anyone could love God or his neighbour to order; the sacraments—

mysterious but quite unintelligible: so it went on. I do not think that Jesus ever came within our view, or that God was more than a name. And the private interview—did we have one? If so it was just 'You're getting to be a man now, and must learn to stand on your own feet. Play the game like a sportsman. Keep straight, and you'll never regret it. Religion can be an enormous help.' Am I parodying him? That at least is the impression that the whole time, except the ceremony itself, made on me. Of the headmaster's weekly addresses I remember one line, 'Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet,' which we all repeated many times aloud, but which did not in itself explain much except to recall the All-seeing Eye of childhood; and of the Bishop's sermon a discourse upon *sacramentum* as the soldier's oath, and nothing more. And dear God, how some of us wanted you!

Later on when Plato's *Republic* set me thinking, and when the larger issues of life began to attract attention, there were futile efforts to talk to schoolfellows, efforts that only aroused suspicion of my motives; and wistful attempts to win the confidence of one or two of the less terrifying masters; and a growing sense of bewilderment and uncertainty. My glow of emotion lasted for a few months: I took my Communions to heart, and felt a gradually fading awe of the Presence dimly unveiled. But, alas, I had been given a little book of preparation, and in it a list of questions for daily self-examination. My devotion took a morbid turn: I plunged into introspection. That list is still a nightmare. There were days when I could

skim through it lightly ; for after all murder and theft are unusual in adolescence. There were other days in which every question was a torment : I had broken all the commandments and their sub-divisions, and could dig up sins innumerable that were not in the catalogue. And always the final question ' Have I fallen into my besetting sin ? ' intrigued and worried me. What was it ? I knew by large experience most of the synonyms for the less comely faults of the flesh : but my ' besetting sin ' is still a riddle to me. Shades of my inquisitor, I wonder if you know how your vagueness harassed my innocence ! It was the greatest relief of my life when six months later I asked my sister, confirmed at the same time and presented with the same book, how she got on with it, and was told in a burst of rebel glee that she had thrown it long ago into the canal. My own copy escaped a similar fate, but I never used it again.

Probably I was very immature for my age : certainly my efforts to think were drastically snubbed both by masters and boys : at least I finished my schooling without any real understanding of Christianity either in theory or in practice. On the whole religious people did not appeal to me : some of them were obviously sincere, but credulous, unbalanced, and generally ineffective. Here and there were clergy who were not inhuman : as such they were just like laymen, except that they wore different clothes and indulged in formal exercises of devotion : but most of them lived in a world of their own, and like the good man who tried to enlighten me about sex

did not touch my level at all. The New Testament was like the classics, only written in worse Greek. There were ideas in it: but so there were in Plato; and nobody seemed to care about them, provided you translated correctly and could get up the notes. Literature had something about God in it; but nature was much more evident; and Tennyson was more popular than Browning. Science and the world of birds and insects, the wonderland of form and structure, the panorama of evolution, these fascinated me: but I was on the classical side and had never been in a laboratory, and though I longed to be a surgeon could get no further than the dissection, out of school, of a field-mouse or a sparrow.

Modern schoolboys will find it hard to realise how completely my training belonged to the old order. The classical tradition monopolised our attention. Science and even mathematics were regarded with open scorn, the latter as a necessary evil, the former as an insolent intruder. I did my last Euclid, my last equation when I was fourteen and could pass the Higher Certificate. In 1900 there was no science side; and when our science master left for a magnificent career elsewhere his successor had not even the rudimentary equipment of a laboratory—hardly a test-tube, certainly not a balance that weighed accurately. The old world of Latin and Greek, stretched to include concessions to literature and history and the Bible, was our environment: the new knowledge belonged to another and inferior sort of person: 'stinks,' we declared, was fit only for 'stinkers.' Those of us who are distressed at

the inability of the older clergy to appreciate the world of modern thought should recognise how vast is the gulf between the senior masters of thirty years ago and those of to-day, how deeply intrenched was the vested interest in the preservation of the ancient régime, how completely the public schools ignored the study of nature. It may still be doubted whether any medium of education has greater power than the classics to foster both accuracy and imagination. The records demonstrate that a trained classical scholar can turn to other subjects, and in a year or two surpass those who have been brought up in them. But the effect of the ostracism of the sciences was to leave religion entangled with archaeology, to give us God in terms of Sinai and Olympus rather than of evolution and experience, and to suggest that Jesus belonged only to the world of the first century.

It was not that I had rejected religion or disbelieved in God or thought little of the church. Only, as before so now, religion and life belonged to different worlds, and the world of life was full of interest, and of pain. I couldn't begin to think it out, and truth to tell was not specially eager to do so. Practical problems were more urgent than theological. Each day had its hopes and worries : there was always plenty to keep me busy, and generally something, holidays or an afternoon in the country, to look forward to. Existence was a difficult business : but the difficulties had nothing to do with God. If I could run the house without making a mess of it, and get a decent scholarship, and play a better game of fives, and avoid

getting ragged or given away, and perhaps win a place in the house team, or get leave off on the next Saint's day, all would be well. There were a myriad questions yeasting inside me, a myriad guesses and doubts, and a repressed longing for friendship : but if a Deity was there, He was quite unobtrusive ; one must live from day to day, and make the best of it. And always there were the larches in the spinney and the starlings on the roof ; and on Sundays the fall of the hill over woodlands to the brook, and the squirrels and the magpies in the oaks ; and in August the sands of Dee, and cricket with my father, and sketching with my mother, and the sun setting behind Hilbre, and the wild fowl calling in the dusk ; and over all the brooding presence of the mystery far nearer there than in the churches, the mystery whose name is surely God.

It is surprising to me now that the contrast between religion and life did not compel me to an earlier decision. But at school the need for some compensation, the discipline and occasional emotion of chapel services, and the thought of my mother kept me from any active revolt against God. Belief in Him was very bewildering and increasingly unreal : but I never faced my doubts or broke through the taboos. Yet my foothold in the church's world was so precarious that the least shock was certain to dislodge it.

The blow fell when, a week after my last summer term, I read Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm*. It is a book written as few have been in a woman's heart's blood, a book whose motto is ' a striving, and a striving, and an ending

in nothing.' The poignancy of it and those words in particular seemed to epitomise for me the lessons of my school-time. And its fable of the hunter was exactly suited to one who was facing the beginning of a new life. I too would go down into the land of negation and denial and would seek in loneliness for the white bird whose name is truth. It is easy now to smile at the childish revolt of a lad of nineteen when his house of cards fell to the ground, and at the conceit with which he dedicated himself to so grandiose a quest. At the time it was a sad and a solemn business, full of the bitter-sweet of youth, its despair and its egotism, its tragedies and its vows.

Looking back upon it I conclude that it was all, except perhaps the moral tone of the school, very normal: even at the time it never struck me as unusual. Only the feeling of insecurity, the absence of any master-motive, the lack of encouragement or guidance, the failure to find a companion made me feel thwarted and sore. One longed for friendship; made timid advances; tried to talk; and then was laughed at, or betrayed. Long before I rebelled against religion, I had rebelled against the conventional outlook of staff and school; and if my complaints were febrile and secret, behind them was a real sense of injustice and frustration. Why after all should it be ridiculous to care more about butterflies than about football? Why all this fuss about snobs like Horace or prigs like Cicero? Why devote all one's time to the mock-heroics of Virgil and the lubricity of Ovid, and the rendering of bad English verse into worse Latin? Surely one boy could be

fond of another without being necessarily immoral. Surely this bubbling curiosity and passion for ideas and desire to discuss and explore them was not anything to be ashamed of. What was the purpose of an existence in which the best people seemed to care for nothing except health and games and food and funny stories? They were much more important and effective than I was, much more popular and successful. They could play for the school, and read pages of their praise in the magazine: I could only get a scholarship, and be dismissed in half a line. People might talk about religion and self-sacrifice and the value of ideals and the example of Jesus Christ: but it all ended in talk. If you were strong enough, you took what you liked; otherwise you were pushed aside. The religion of the churches was preached in vain in a school whose ethics were almost those of the jungle; and for me its fairy-land was ceasing to exist even as a refuge. The stars spoke of a cold peace and austere majesty; God might well be there: but the earth was 'full of darkness and cruel habitations.' Was there a God or no?

Until I read the *African Farm* that riddle remained unasked or I vaguely thought that it could be solved. Probably subconscious motives prevented me from facing it: the fantasy had its value. When the repressions of school were removed, I saw the issue plain. God was a dream; He had never been very much more: Jesus a legend; so He had always seemed: life 'a tale of little meaning, though the words are strong'; loneliness and endurance, or else brutality and the

power to oppress, those were its alternatives. The hunter must stand alone; he must suffer, and struggle, and fail: that was no new thing, and youth is full of pride. Somewhere was the bird of truth, and the way to its haunts was through a wilderness of negation: it was easy enough to deny when one had never learned to affirm. At least it was better to face the facts than to live in a world of make-believe, pretending that existence was a jolly game, and enjoying the laughter of fools, and indulging in surreptitious lusts, and going to matins on Sundays in one's best clothes. Green-sickness, do you say? Yes, but a very common and a very unpleasant disease: and some of the best of my contemporaries never recovered from it.

The remedy is less easy to find than the complaint, so long as teachers will not take God seriously. There was the fault of it all. Religion as I met it was Stoicism—and for those who were not up to its severe demands there was Epicurus and the cry of 'bread and the games.' Christianity thirty years ago was at a low ebb. The scientists were justifiably hostile. The higher criticism had played havoc with simple faith. The clergy clung blindly to the old ways, shirking the issues that really mattered, and striving by cheerful services and popular preaching to conceal their insecurity and doubts. The schools stood for manliness and good form: they had to deal with boys in the mass and could only turn them out to a pattern. So they adopted an easy routine. Health was important: give the boys cricket and football, and plenty of it. Discipline must be

maintained : see that everyone does the same thing at the same time, and fill up the time-table. Emotion is dangerous and un-English : discourage all friendships, especially between boys of different ages. Religion is an adjunct to morality : keep sentiment out of it : don't be dogmatic—we have Jews and Nonconformists to consider : character is what matters, and character depends upon a sense of duty : love—well, that may come later when you get married and have boys of your own ; at present, and like marriage, three-quarters of it is just beastliness. This was actually said by a housemaster to one of his boys in my time at school : and the master was a parson and father of a family.

It is difficult not to appear ironical : but this is fact, not irony, and I have not emphasised the darkest spots in the picture. Of course it is evidently not all that a Christian education ought to be. Let us, however, give it credit for its merits. Passion is dangerous ; sentiment can turn to sentimentality and create worse ills than can Stoicism. In these days of Montessori and self-government and individual self-expression there is a softness, a moral instability, a self-regard which can be more unpleasant than the strong silence of a Seton Merriman hero. It is no bad thing for boys to rough it, to get their fibre hardened by discomfort, and their whims corrected by ridicule. Adolescence always means upheaval and readjustment : boys do not escape them by being sheltered from temptation. Life for anyone who feels and thinks is not an easy business : those who take the strain young are seldom liable to

permanent injury. And even where the standards of a school are low very many come through unspoiled, and those who are damaged often manage to get over it.

Yet when that is said, we have only proved that paganism is not altogether evil. For such a system is assuredly sub-Christian. Jesus might almost never have been. And it fails just where He can help.

Passion may be dangerous, but for all that it is the driving-force of life, the sole source of energy, the power which we must control but cannot dispense with. And like every other natural gift it should be handled reverently and discreetly. Its first flowering is in the entirely sexless hero-worship that boys of fourteen feel for their seniors, a fine unselfish devotion that goes out unasked and often unrecognised by its object: it requires nothing and expects nothing except the joy of adoration. There is sentimentality in it; it is, indeed, pure sentiment unalloyed with criticism and devoid of all intellectual elements. So it can be misused, can be exploited and sensualised if public opinion looks lewdly at it or the hero is lustfully inclined. Or it can be directed to the enrichment of two lives, giving the older a sense of responsibility and a foretaste of paternity, and the younger a romance clean and sweet and vitalising, in the strength of which his whole character can be reformed. It is still, I am afraid, true that nine out of ten schoolmasters and nearly all schoolmistresses look upon such hero-worship with dislike and visit it with suspicion and disapproval. The obvious policy is certainly to suppress it, and

in a school like mine it was condemned as a matter of course : indeed if two boys of unequal age and different houses were seen speaking, immorality would be taken for granted. But the result is not quite what the staff desires. Driven underground, assumed to imply sexuality, denied open expression, passion is distorted but not removed. Either the boy gets disgusted with this new and fascinating impulse ; damps it down ; and lives dry and starved for the loss of it : or he seeks illicit outlets, treating it as a thing of shame, and taking a dirty delight in exercising it dirtily.

Repression is no good. At best a fine and beautiful thing is lost, and life is impoverished. At worst you have an underworld of rampant immorality. Passion cannot be eliminated : it can be kept uncontaminated, be sublimated as the jargon of to-day would say. For at this stage it has no need for physical expression ; as yet love does not ' crave the flesh ' : such hero-worship is pure romance, and those who have experienced it know that if sexuality enters it comes not as a consummation but as a defilement. Indeed for very many their adoration needs no visible object. I fell in love first with Julius Cæsar, or rather with Warde Fowler's portrait of him ; and then for a little time with Hannibal ; and then with Hector, the Hector of the great parting with Andromache ; and only at intervals felt a bashful admiration for some hero of the school-world.

This then is the time when Jesus the great adventurer, Jesus the perfect example of fortitude, Jesus the Lord of all good life ought to be given to us. As He stands out preparing Himself for

His work, challenging the conventions and cowardice of His time, confronting His enemies in quietness and confidence, choosing His road and walking it without fear, facing certain death for the sake of God and His purpose, He would have drawn a boy like me to His feet. He is so plainly the hero that I wanted, the hero who was not merely strong but sensitive and sympathetic, brave and yet tragic, lonely and wholly lovable. If only He had been as real as Cæsar; if only I had known His story as I knew the Iliad; if only my teachers had not put a halo on His head, and talked affectedly, or not at all, about Him; if they had treated Him as what He is, the greatest and most alive of the Sons of Men; then the passion pent up within me would have found its object: my affection and my mind would have been His: I should have been given the friend that I was seeking.

This does not mean that I believe in or desire adolescent 'conversions' or an emotional Jesus-worship, or that a boy of fourteen has any use for the Nicene Creed or for Christianity in its full significance. The incarnate Son of God would have repelled me even more than the gentle Shepherd of the sheep. The elaborate ceremonial of the Mass would have made Jesus 'numinous' but unreal; and the hymns of the Protestant would have sickened me with their pietism and disgusted me with their illiteracy. And any normal boy would feel the same.

Nor do I mean that such a hero-worship of Jesus will be equally satisfying to us all, or that it would take the place of attachment to friends of

flesh and blood : it would rather enrich and deepen all other relationships. If Jesus were revealed in His manhood, and if the school staff obviously believed in Him, they could then fearlessly encourage intercourse between boys young and old. There would occasionally be risks : a small percentage of youngsters come corrupted from their homes or their preparatory schools, though the number is smaller than it was. But with a good public opinion and a sincere and rather simple Christian worship the risk would be very small, and the change in health, in intelligence, in corporate spirit, in individual happiness would be enormous.

Needless to say this belief of mine is not based solely upon knowledge of the defects of my own training and a theoretical hope that in Jesus those defects can be remedied. It has been my good fortune to know intimately several men who as boys 'made friends' with Jesus ; they are the finest people of my acquaintance : and to know various houses in our public schools where the master has ventured not to repress but to sublimate ; and in them the standard of scholarship, of athletics, and of morals has risen rapidly and beyond belief. The thing can be done.

For the conclusion of the matter would appear to be this. Given anything like a decent home-life the child starts with a strong sense of what Otto calls 'the holy.' He feels the mystery and awe—an awe, not necessarily a shuddering dread. He has a natural religion, sufficient as a basis for prayer and for moral training. At thirteen or thereabouts he wants a hero : let him find the

human Jesus. Drop metaphysics: the time for them is not yet. Don't identify Jesus with God; for as yet God means the mystery, and if Jesus is God He too becomes mysterious and unearthly and remote and mythical. Give him Jesus as you give him Moses or David, Pericles or Scipio or Napoleon, but as the greatest character in history, the supreme figure in the life of mankind. And show him by your whole attitude that Jesus is real, that you are enthusiastic in your admiration and proud of your loyalty, and that the study of Him not only supplies a perfect example for us to imitate and a perfect friend for us to know, but helps us to make sense of the world. I doubt if the boy will understand the meaning of the resurrection or think of Jesus as with him in a closer way than Cæsar: never mind, the important thing is that he should care about Him, realise His grandeur, respond to His appeal. So let the approach be that of the early disciples: they found the carpenter, the prophet, the healer, the hero: it was only after years of discipleship that they confessed Him Son of God.

And then, when the heroism of Jesus has made its appeal, when it has been realised that He speaks with authority and as master of men and things, let the hero be revealed also as the poet. Nearly all boys keep a sense of the sacredness of beauty, of the fascination of nature, of the presence hidden in sea and sky. They are thrilled by the poetry of the Sermon on the Mount, even if they cannot understand its paradoxes. They appreciate the parables of seed-corn, and springing grain, and the finding of a heavenly meaning in simple things:

for to them also come at times glimpses of an inward and spiritual grace and the conviction that the universe itself is bursting with a secret of good news.

Thereafter they can be initiated into the significance of the kingdom of God. Jesus chose a group of disciples, and laid upon them early in their training a task of service. Boys go through a regular phase of clannishness, and though the house and the school are their natural 'packs' there is room for the herd-instinct in religion, if the bond of loyalty to a common leader be kept plain. Personally I have no very high opinion of the method which puts the church first, and bases Christianity not upon Jesus but upon membership of a guild or attendance at a children's eucharist. It is effective for a time and can be beautiful, and perhaps the effect may eventually be wholesome. But the desire to run with a crowd soon passes, and if a boy has not found his hero, and suddenly outgrows his habit of attachment to a group, he will ask himself what all these kids are playing at. In the crisis of adolescence he, and his hero, must be alone: for we have to achieve the captaincy of our souls in loneliness, and must gain individuality before we can be fit to transcend it. The herd-instinct has its way with us for a few years: then before we come to our manhood we must go out unaccompanied into the wilderness, and there wrestle with the devil. We can take Jesus with us: we cannot, if we are to be men, take the church or even our pals. So much truth there is in the adage about standing on our own feet.

So let the kingdom be presented in terms rather of the world's need than of the claims of the church. Most boys wonder vaguely how they are to use their lives: all of them picture themselves as capable of high service in a high calling. We have all, during the lonely years, stood before a looking-glass and dreamed that some day we would act finely. 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' is a phrase that we have applied to ourselves with an unjustified confidence. There is, no doubt, a deal of mere vanity in our ambitions: perhaps they are stronger in the repressed than in the successful. But youth is not ungenerous, and indeed the challenge of the time is plain. If I had been told in those days something of the vast need and signal opportunity of to-day, my transient wish to be a missionary might not have passed so soon. Make the demand large: most boys reject the church because its claims on them seem small and cheap. State the situation clearly, proving that the call to service is obvious and world-wide. Give the youngsters their right to dream, and show them the romance that is even now being enacted in the slums of England or the river sides of West Africa. And let Jesus have His honour as the great pioneer, the great crusader, the great missionary.

Jesus and the world-wide kingdom, hero-worship and the passion for adventure, it is sad to have gone through six years at school and never to have had a glimpse of them; six years, and never to have studied St. Mark or to have heard of Mackay and Hannington. Christian missionaries, doctors and teachers were working

miracles in Nigeria and Ashanti, in Zanzibar and Uganda while I was at school: we were told all about the generals and the skirmishes in the Boer War; of that other campaign never a word.

Here again the position is now no doubt different from that of thirty years ago. The mass of popular 'lives' of Jesus, the appearance of modernised versions of the New Testament, the abundance of books about Christian life and work, and above all the discovery of the interest of Bible-study on critical lines have broken down the conspiracy of silence in many quarters. Schools are beginning to discover that one cannot explain history or literature, and pass over the founder of Christianity in silence; and the churches, although still occupied with Old Testament types, with doctrinal controversies, and with sensational novelties in sociology or psychology, books and politics, are discovering that Jesus attracts where ecclesiasticism repels, and are learning to speak of Him without cant or mythologising. But the tendency to pass Him by in silence is still far too strong, and in my school-days was almost universal. It is this neglect, far more than any other cause, that has produced the discrediting of Christianity and the bewilderment about religion.

Take a proof from two of the most interesting and sincere of the works published in the last twelve months. In *Religio Militis* Mr. Austin Hopkinson writes magnificently of the comradeship of God in the loneliness and austerity of battle—and calls the divine comrade Mithras, only revealing in a cryptic phrase at the end of the chapter that a greater than Mithras is in his mind.

And Prof. Julian Huxley in his quest for a religion for the new age can take us through long pages of excellent but second-hand detail about comparative religion and psychology, and disclose poignantly his own experience of worship, and yet neither discuss nor explain the greatest religious force in human history. It would be incredible that honest minds should hesitate to mention or should be able to ignore Jesus Christ, if it were not that their failure is shared by almost all those who controlled our upbringing. We were allowed to conclude that Jesus did not matter; and this for the teacher or the pupil, indeed for any human being, is to be presented with Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. We may conclude that the Nazarene was a martyr or a maniac or even, with Drews and Mr. J. M. Robertson, a myth: He remains the most significant influence in history, and as such is far too important to be omitted. And whether as Christians or not, we are no longer living in days when a merciful wisdom can be allowed to 'spare thy sister when she prays.' Better no paradise at all than a paradise of fools.

Of course the reasons for silence are natural enough. An enormous sanctity still attaches to 'the name that is above every name,' a sanctity so strong that even our younger moderns, for whom as they declare nothing is sacred, recoil from violating it. It is hardly possible not to discern traces of Victorian prudery, or rather of reverence and godly fear, in their refusal to strip Him of the veils. Are they afraid of His power to charm, the power that drew Clutton-Brock to enthusiastic discipleship and Mr. Middleton Murry to wistful

homage? Or are they so repelled by the slobberings of pietism or the follies perpetrated in His cause that they will not take the trouble to investigate what a ruthless criticism has revealed behind the mask of mediaeval dogma and the crudity of revivalist hymns? Or do they placidly accept the belief that Strauss and Renan, Van Manen and Loisy have said the last word, and that the present generation of scholars is working in ignorance of them? Such questions are not asked in irony, but in the effort to understand how it is that Jesus has, apparently, dropped out of account.

In my own case the answer is comparatively plain. Jesus came to me in the atmosphere of the numinous: His divinity was so emphasised that His life and teaching were unreal, a stage-play, a fairy-tale, a series of oracles, an intrusion from another world. As such they were confusing and contradictory: without their human setting, treated as the isolated utterances of a God, disregarded in practice by church and state and school, how should I take them as having meaning for me? Moreover they came in familiar and archaic phrasing, aphorisms like those of the Seven Sages spoken by a haloed, rich-robed, smooth-bearded figure against a background of mummery and stained glass. And the most familiar scenes, the babe in the manger, the coming of the Magi, the walking on the water, the raising of Lazarus, the rolling away of the stone, the speaking with tongues, these were surely legend like the tales of Perseus and Heracles, of Aeneas and Romulus. That old wonderland had served its turn, and could only survive now as fable not as truth. It might

breathe out an exquisite fragrance like any dream of childhood, but belonged to an age long buried, an age remote from our own. Men had done well to wrap it up reverently and speak of it with hushed voices as they do of the once-loved dead. But we with youth in our veins and a new age to inherit must be content to put away childish things. Problems remained for our solving: an answer could not be found by going back—even to Jesus. Reverence and scepticism had alike ignored Him: piety vulgarised Him: what I saw was either nebulous or repellent. It was not hard to pass Him by.

II. AT THE UNIVERSITY

'Journeyers gaily with their own youth.'

If schooling had been a doleful business, the memory of its unpleasantness was intensified for me by what followed. With the solemn priggishness of the young I had chosen as my motto in life Odysseus' great word 'Be strong, my heart: ere now worse fate was thine,' little realising how true it was to prove. Many of us are unhappy in adolescence, most of us enjoy the university. Had anyone ever better cause to enjoy it than I had?

Yet my first term started with what seemed a disaster. Picture me a shy and unimposing freshman, looking to be snubbed, accustomed to accept the idolatry of the athlete as a law of the universe, having lost what little comfort religion could give, and entering upon a new life for which my only qualification seemed to be a working knowledge of Latin and Greek. Weary as I was of the classics, they supplied a pedestal on which to base my self-respect: if all else was beyond me, I could at least do passable elegiacs and hexameters. How I laboured over that first copy of verses! Judged by school standards the result

was, I knew, good ; certainly the best that I could ever hope to produce. And so with it to my director of studies. A glance—purely formal : the slash of a blue pencil : and 'Never dare to show me up this schoolboy stuff again.' I realise now that it was his invariable practice, a good strong dose to purge the senior scholar of his pride. But for me it was devastating. If this was bad, then my whole standards of judgment were false : I no longer knew the difference between good and evil and had wasted years on misdirected labours. My interest in classical scholarship had perhaps never been very vigorous : it was killed at a stroke. Thereafter a minimum of drudgery should suffice : my interests should go elsewhere.

Cruel as it was, the blow was a blessing. It robbed me of the one refuge of my injured vanity. I could not even become a scholar. Let us eat and drink : if life is a sorry farce, and ambition a will-o'-the-wisp, why worry—especially when there are so many attractive things to enjoy and to discuss ? Freedom from responsibility for other people's morals, freedom from the boredom of compulsory games, freedom to choose one's friends and spend day and night in their company, freedom to wander over the countryside, freedom to revel in the wonderland of Cambridge—if the classics were lost, these were sheer gain.

At first the gain was not very evident. The process of repression had gone deep. One does not suffer for four years without getting what is now called an inferiority-complex. In order to be humble it is no doubt good to be humiliated,

but shyness and self-depreciation are poor relations of humility : and I had the psychology of a poor relation, wincing at a word, expecting patronage and yet resenting it, eager for friends but not daring to accept them as such, conscious that I was out of the cage but afraid to spread my wings.

And then of course the friend came ; and the real glory of university life began. It is commonly supposed that boys go up to Cambridge in order to acquire knowledge from dons or laboratories ; or to row and run and complete their public school careers ; or to lay the foundation for success at the bar or in the church ; or to obtain the hall-mark of gentility. The real justification for the existence of the old universities is, of course, none of these : the secret of their worth is not found in the lecture-room or the playing-fields or the Union Society or the dining-club. Two men, two chairs, two pipes and a fire—that is their symbol ; and those nights of the gods when we rambled over all things in heaven and earth with minds 'unclouded by experience and unhampered by knowledge' are our happiest memories. Work and sport, rags and examinations, these are side-issues : the main purpose of the place is friendship, and the building up of character by intercourse with men of kindred tastes and different training. Plato was right when he said that the young behaved like puppies, delighting to tear in pieces all that they can get their teeth into : but his conclusion that they must be forbidden the study of philosophy could only be enforced if they were provided with an appropriate desert island apiece. It is the vast and

essential business of ranging oneself, of coming to terms with the universe, of discovering a purpose in life that the university exists to foster. And it is a far more important task than the admirers or critics of undergraduate life will usually admit. If the colleges exist, in the time-honoured phrase, as ' places of education, religion, learning and research,' the two former are the more precious, and for them talk and tobacco are more necessary than professors and chapel services.

For me and for my first and most intimate friend, who was also a rather lonely adventurer after knowledge, Cambridge meant unlimited opportunity for those intimacies of long and discursive debate which, starting from mundane affairs, a book, a poem, a race, an acquaintance, lead on to general questions of literature and science, morals and character, and thence dive into speculations about time, space and deity, the meaning and purpose of existence, and the validity of sensual and mystic experience. We rowed together, though he was a good oar and I a very bad one ; we fed together, for at first we were both in college; we cycled and walked together—I wonder if he still remembers how frequently coming over the bridge in Silver Street we found ourselves discussing time as a fourth dimension !—and together we plunged into the full stream of social life, rapidly discovering new friends and wider interests and a larger place in our little world. He had a fascinating mind, was older and more developed, had a better knowledge of books and art, and like myself was interested in ideas as much as in people, in nature more than in politics. We

were both amazingly ignorant, crude and ill-informed : but we took nothing at second-hand, were free from preconceptions, and knowing our incapacity possessed an unlimited curiosity and a real passion to satisfy it. His influence upon me was certainly stronger than that of any others save my mother and my wife.

Our experience was, I think, typical of the undergraduate life around us. The sort of writer who imagines that the chief pursuits of the Cantab are either the acquisition of a degree or a succession of games, dances, flirtations and dinners, knows little of the average member of the university. All these elements enter in : some few men read and do nothing else, some few riot and revel : but neither work nor play loom so large as at school. And nearly everyone philosophizes. I remember the amazement of a naval officer, one of the delicious invaders whom the Admiralty sent to us after the war, over a sermon of mine in chapel in which I had taken for granted that everybody was interested in discovering the meaning of life and would think seriously about it. We wandered round the Fellows' garden afterwards, and he asked with a sort of awe ' Padre, do you really suppose that any of these undergrads bother about such things.' ' About fifty per cent. ' I hazarded—and though he didn't believe me I fancy the estimate was far too low. Certainly among my own contemporaries almost everybody had his deeper side and made little effort to conceal it. There were of course fools and featherpates ; there were a few whose manners and morals were uncertain or worse : but that religion in its widest

sense mattered to the vast majority was quite certain—though it was the sort of religion that the orthodox would not have recognised. We were in fact at that time mostly materialists, inclined to explain everything in terms of physics and chemistry, but not letting our belief that we were mere machines influence our behaviour or prevent us from discussing and accepting views which should have been logically impossible. In this respect we were not very unlike our elders: logic was not our strong point.

It was indeed a difficult time for Christians in the student-world, and especially in a college like mine with a large proportion of scientists and medicals. 'Ubi tres medici, duo athei,' my classical lecturer used to say; and when Weismannism and the determinism of the Mendelians dominated biology there was little room for religion. But some of us will always wonder whether the hostility of the scientists or the futility of the Christians were the graver obstacle. The university has always had a strong evangelical tradition, and at the beginning of the century almost the only religious society that affected the students was the C.I.C.C.U., whose tenets have always included a belief in the verbal inspiration of scripture. For their zeal, courage, and devotion no praise can be too high: they were, I think, respected even if left severely alone. But for most of us their intellectual position was simply a mockery. It seemed incredible that anyone with sufficient education to pass the Little-go should still believe in the talking serpent or Jonah's whale or Balaam's ass or Joshua's sun or the cryptograms that

foretold the Second Advent. Yet such men not only existed but were enthusiastic in the search for proselytes ; and they were the only Christians that I met during my first two years. Jesus, but for them, might almost never have been : and they made Him peculiarly unattractive.

The survival of this society is indeed among the most astonishing features of Cambridge life. Most of its members fall into one of two types : they are either highly suggestible with that strange and almost unearthly look which is the seal of a child-like faith, or they are hard, thin-lipped, obviously repressing a mass of unexamined doubts, men of strong will and narrow bigotry. That either type manages to keep its faith and yet read for a degree is proof of the enormous power of convictions, however misplaced. They only do so by withdrawing from contact with their fellows, by living in a close community, and by a rigid discipline of prayer-meetings and bible-readings. Admirable as they are in the consistency of their witness, the amount of harm that they do to the religion of Jesus is simply incalculable. A youngster like myself, keen to find out the truth of things, but resolved at all costs to keep his intellectual honesty, finds Christianity represented by people who insist upon the holding of beliefs which not only involve contradictions and impute to God a character unworthy of a decent human being, but destroy all possibility of making sense of the universe and demand the sacrifice of rational thought. Naturally he regards the Christian faith as a whole, assumes that it can only be accepted by those who are prepared to surrender their

intelligence, and rejects it altogether as an idle superstition. It is impossible enough to accept an infallible authority even when upheld by the prestige of Rome and the majesty and wonder of the Mass. But if the choice lay between Bible and Pope, most of us would not choose the former.

Beyond the verbal-inspirationists there were the clerical dons and the college chapel, and at the close of my second year a small group of Anglo-Catholics. Ancient habit, and I must add an occasional interview with the Dean, kept me fairly regular in public worship; and I believe that the attendance did me good. It was one thing to profess that existence was a 'striving and a striving and an ending in nothing'; it was another to rebel against established custom and forego the definite enjoyment of psalms and hymns. Certainly my unbelief was not sufficiently militant to protest against the rule of occasional conformity. And my best friend was a choral scholar, and I had sometimes to read lessons; so we went together. On the whole, and for myself, compulsory chapel was an advantage. As a don and after the war I advocated relaxing the compulsion: and am now disposed to think that in doing so I was mistaken. But by that time the Student Christian Movement had established a strong position within the university; materialism had lost its power; and a religious outlook was far more general than in my own undergraduate days. The change came about the year 1909, when the annual conferences at Swanwick brought a new and vital influence into the colleges, an influence which has, I think, increased ever since.

For my first eighteen months I was otherwise a pure pagan, and though growing fast was still very immature. The frost at school had nipped my buds severely, and though Cambridge was a spring-time it took me a long time to respond to its warmth. When the season is delayed, spring comes in a day, as I saw it come one April at Symond's Yat: in the morning the woods were brown and bare; as I sat sketching they changed colour around me, and by sunset the hedgerows were in leaf and the first swallow was hawking flies over the river. So it was with me. In the Christmas vacation of 1906 the miracle happened, and every shrivelled twig of me burst into bloom. I had come down a shy and awkward lad, self-conscious in company and rather morbid when alone. Suddenly the whole world seemed transfigured: people were kind and easy, friendliness was natural, life was bursting with beauty, the whole air was full of song; and I could take my place in it all simply and happily without fear or introspection, finding every common thing a new delight. It is an indication of the change in me that having till then never written a line of verse, except in Latin or Greek, I poured out in the early weeks of the year a torrent of Italian sonnets. My 'first fine careless rapture' was not poetry: one glimpse at the queer old book into which I copied them so lovingly testifies to that; but the impulse was there, even if its result was more ridiculous than sublime.

The next two terms were spent in a haze of happiness. I smiled at life, and life smiled back again. The discipline of rhyme unloosed my pen,

and I began to write ' leaders ' for the *Granta*—my first contribution being characteristically entitled ' Nerves ' and written when I had gone out to breakfast with a rowing blue, and found myself unexpected and the great man still in bed. If Cambridge has ever been so beautiful, she can seldom have had a more ardent lover. I would take my books of a morning and wander out to the seat beneath the box-bush with the wilderness of St. John's behind it, and in front the line of chestnuts stretching to the willows and the river. Aconites, snowdrops, crocuses, anemones, daffodils, polyanthus—always the banks were bright with a succession of flowers. And always the song of the wrens, and the chatter of the tits, and the tapping of a nuthatch, and the antics of the jackdaws kept me company. And at night, when work was over and the time was near for coffee and a friend, there was the Great Court of Trinity, wonderful at all times in the artless perfection of its circuit and the supreme art of its fountain, most wonderful under a veiled moon when lighted windows throw the walls into mystery, and the water murmurs in the darkness. And once there was an evening when the sun sank behind Madingley in a sky blood-red from horizon to zenith, and the trees took on a mourning garb of sombre purple, and the dusk was heavy with the fate of ancient gods. At such times there would come to me something of what Wordsworth and the mystics have made familiar—the sense that for a moment time had stopped, that suddenly the visible world had become transparent, that the eternal reality, beyond and behind the things of sense, had

been unveiled and in an instant of rapture had enfolded me into union with itself. Certainly those times, every little detail of their setting, is present to me as a possession for ever : I can live them over again, slipping back without effort into the very sights and sounds and scents of them, and experiencing the same thrill and conviction of communion. And certainly their effect was deep and characteristic : one came back to earth seeing it as if through the wrong end of a telescope small and bright, and seeing oneself in it, a disembodied spectator of one's own little deeds : and yet along with this sense of detachment was an equally strong sense of oneness with all that is ; the colours and shapes were part of me, their life was one with mine, for we were all sustained by a life infinite and unchanging, calm and sane and sweet, in which one's emotions were quickened, one's intellect clarified, and one's goodwill enormously increased.

Fantasy, the projection of my own thwarted yearnings, morbid emotion—was it one of these ? If it had happened in my years of loneliness, if I had been soaked in religious literature, if I had been overstrained or unhealthy, even then in view of its enriching effects and permanence I should hesitate to explain it in terms of compensation or psychic dissociation. But in fact I had at the time no worries except trivial anxieties about May examinations, was an entirely normal and healthy undergraduate, not in the least bothered about religion, not believing in God or in anything beyond the material world, not expecting any such experience, eating and sleeping, playing games,

revelling in the small events of college life. At the time I just enjoyed it, without making much attempt to explain it, or if I did setting it down to some trick of my own mood influenced by the beauty of the scene. Indeed, for a year or two I regarded it as identical with the elation produced by moderate indulgence in alcohol, and supposed that it depended upon a toxic condition of brain and nerves. Looking back critically I can only say that the impression is so real, so much more real than any of the events of that time, and that the circumstances of my life were so ordinary that I find it hard to explain away the conviction of its actuality; but a bare statement to that effect will hardly satisfy those who have not shared the experience. As to the parallel with mild intoxication, though this may produce a feeling of detachment and superiority to one's surroundings, there is in it none of the sense of perspective and heightened sensibility; and afterwards one gets a sick headache instead of an abounding enlargement of health, vigour and friendliness.

Such experience, which is common to a large number, if not to all normal folks, had for me a very definitely living character. Whatever was the reality of which I was conscious, it was certainly not inanimate or mechanical, but throbbing with vitality and meaning. It is often argued, and very notably by Professors Whitehead and Julian Huxley, that mysticism does not support belief in a personal God. If by this they mean that the contact is not with a person or, as I prefer to put it, an individual, I entirely agree. But I should as strongly maintain that it is essentially

the communion of life with life, that in it the whole universe becomes alive, and the material elements can no more be considered as dead stuff than can the clothes of a friend. To call it impersonal is to suggest what is to me a complete misinterpretation. Here is neither nothingness nor lifeless force, but something, someone, not less living than myself, embracing me and all that is in the unity of an infinite being. Let us get rid of the idea of an old man in heaven, of the anthropomorphism that ascribes parts and passions to the deity: let us make all allowance for the likelihood that we project our own concepts upon that which we apprehend: let us call God supra-personal lest a taint of individuality be suspected: but to rank Him as less than the highest that I know, as lower than the personal, would be to me false to the whole quality of my experience, false to the data of my observation. And if I am to make a full confession, I cannot but maintain that the Being beyond and within the universe constrains me at such moments to recognise Him as loving and good.

It was a wonderful spring for me, and in the summer came its crowning glory. In April, when calling at the Lodge, I met the Master's niece: she had come to live with him during my first term; my rooms adjoined his house, but till then she and I had barely seen one another. In May-week there were two picnics together; afterwards we exchanged half a dozen letters; in July, a few days after my twenty-first birthday, we became engaged. It was all a delicious recklessness: neither of us had a halfpenny or any particular prospects; no wonder we were forbidden to meet

or correspond for six weeks or to announce our engagement for a twelvemonth. But it worked; and we are unashamed and unrepentant. May-week engagements are proverbially brittle, and first loves do not always keep their glamour: we have been married nearly twenty years and are lovers still. A year later, when I had obtained a respectable First in the Tripos, my tutor summed up the matter 'When I heard of your engagement I said "there's another of our scholars gone": but now—if you take a second Tripos, get engaged again: it agrees with you.' Like Man Alive I have always been getting engaged again—to the same lady.

Meanwhile, what of the lonely rebel in the land of negation and denial? During the wonder year my unbelief was sorely tried, and maintained only a precarious existence on sufferance and because I was far too happy to bother about theories. There were times when it played a not unpleasant part, giving a piquant flavour to a feast which might otherwise have been cloying. When the high gods open their treasuries and shower a rain of gifts on their children, then a young man will find his joy increased if sometimes he wanders away and assures himself that it is all misery and make-belief, that thought is only chemical change in the grey matter of the brain and action a mechanical and determinate response to material stimuli, that beauty is an illusion and immortality a myth and love the manifestation of sexual instinct. Such pessimism is proper to youth, for an hour or two; the strain of taking it seriously is far too severe to endure for long.

Materialism as a philosophy began very rapidly to lose its grip: it explained nothing, and explained away all the most important things. But it was its practical effects that repelled, even more than its intellectual sterility. I have confessed that Christians were the chief obstacle to my acceptance of Christianity: if materialists or agnostics had been more attractive I might have stayed more contentedly among them. We are so often and so justly told that the church is a poor advertisement for its Lord that I hesitate to turn the tables upon its opponents. But no truthful account of my discovery of Jesus would be complete without a plain reference to my experience of the rebels against Him.

Far be it from me to suggest that (as a foolish bishop once said to me): 'doubt has nearly always a moral origin.' That is a gross libel. So is the argument which quotes the Psalmist and maintains that it is the fool who 'says in his heart, there is no God.' Many unbelievers are not only moral, but so enthusiastically moral as to become positively priggish. Many are so learned that, like Mr. J. M. Robertson, they lose all hold upon wisdom. But I must confess that when once during a rainy spell on the Broads I waded through *Robert Elsmere*, the only book on board and surely one of the dullest that has ever been penned, its effect was an acute attack of flippancy and faith. To put it bluntly the best type of Stoic is nearly always a bore, and not infrequently pre-occupied with his own rather pompous righteousness: he has forgotten how to laugh: he may not be a brute; I hope he is not a god; he is assuredly

not quite a man. Possibly it is just that I come from the other and admittedly more humorous and poetical university; possibly it is only reaction against Victorianism: but of all dreary episodes in the history of thought the Oxford of Matthew Arnold and of Herbert Spencer strikes me as incomparably the most depressing. Its inhabitants are all so earnest, so cultured, so supercilious, so inhuman that their virtue is more repulsive than vice.

We hear much of the humility of the man of science, and in the days of Darwin the attribute was signally and splendidly displayed. But here again, in the first decade of this century, such praise could rarely be bestowed without irony. To describe Sir E. Ray Lankester or my revered Professor Bateson as humble would be a libellous misuse of language; and of the lesser men I am bound to confess that the more sceptical were also the most aggressive. There are still many, and they are among the greatest, whose wide vision of reality fills them with that honest doubt in which I am convinced there is more faith than in half the creeds; men of genuine and wistful agnosticism, with a reverence for truth and a gentleness in controversy and a tenderness for old beliefs which put us Christians to shame. But the epigoni of the triumphant scientists of last century do not always carry their honours easily, and often assume an air of authority in disposing of questions of philosophy upon which they have no claim at all to speak. I had come to science with all the enthusiasm of a neophyte, expecting to find at last a security and a reality which the churches could

not give. I found a vast and fascinating realm of enquiry, a veritable new world for study and contemplation : but I found also claims to finality pushed with a dogmatism and speculations advanced with an arrogance that savoured of the worst abuses of ecclesiasticism. Dominant materialism seemed even more confident than the papacy that it could measure all truth with its own reed. The columns of *Nature* were even more vituperative than those of the *Church Times*.

And along with these were other symptoms that gave me pause. The death of religion might mean a resurrection ; only too often it meant decay ; and in Cambridge at that epoch the scent of corpses was pungent in the air. If it had been fair to reject Christianity on the evidence of the lives of Christians, was the new paganism in any better case ? In my later years in Cambridge I mixed in many circles in and beyond my own college and, I suppose, knew most of the more emancipated of my contemporaries. Many of them were just bewildered youngsters like myself who had never shared, or had easily lost, the religion of their school-days. For a time their cynicism and smartness were amusing : we all like to poke fun at what is respectable and reverend : and the hypocrisy that masquerades as piety asks for cruel exposure. But when we enquired for something more positive than mere perplexity, the result was often to open an abyss under our feet. I am not easily shocked : school and the classics and a normal curiosity and, I hope, an abnormal imagination had given me a wide acquaintance with aspects of life and sex usually

taboo : facts are facts, and I have no wish to run in blinkers. Yet when I became editor of the *Granta* and was sent for review a prize essay on the works of Mr. Aleister Crowley, I confess to a healthy desire to deal violently with its author : if Crowleyanity was the religion of to-morrow, then I should prefer Christian burial to-day : illumination is dearly bought at the cost of necrophily.

So too with many of my contemporaries, liberty simply meant licence, and licence easily became licentiousness. The aesthetic movement was still strong, and in my fourth year I was one of the original members of a society which has since achieved a reputation. We met to read plays, and started decorously enough with the *Playboy of the Western World*. Next week it was a Shaw, and then, I think, *Ghosts*. So far splendid, if not very constructive. Then we lapsed into Congreve, whose indecency is at least subtle and graced by wit. And so to Wycherley—and my departure. Some may call it art, though another monosyllable is more appropriate. Some may murmur *puris omnia pura* : we were not pure, and knew it. To read such stuff in company makes me feel hot and uncomfortable ; if this is freedom, it looks very like the oldest form of slavery. Neo-paganism which was, I suppose, our cult, may have meant to revive the glories of Hellas : it certainly revived its shames. For the homosexual I have a vast sympathy and often a warm affection, though his peculiarity despite the Freudians is utterly outside my experience. But when he runs riot in a university and all sorts of dirty souls catch the cult, the consequences are neither refined nor

enlightening. Judged by their effects on character these rivals of the church were singularly disappointing: it looked as if one must either be lonely or a Christian; for the urge to satisfy the desires of heart and mind would not let me put the quest aside. I wanted a religion, or at least something for which to live. Neither science nor art showed much hope of satisfying me.

If the facts of life threatened to undermine my materialism, it was rudely challenged from two other quarters. Its chief support hitherto had been the feeling that all intelligent people agreed that Christianity was bankrupt. Huxley and his allies had demolished their Christian opponents, and the rationalists' attitude of cold superiority seemed, for a moment, exquisitely heroic: the strong, silent Englishman, too proud to believe, prepared 'because right is right to follow right' did not strike me as ludicrous till later; and then he was soon to seem pathetic. After the agnostics had come Wilde and Shaw and Wells and the assumption that Christianity could be dismissed with a jest: we had not yet begun to perceive that the mockery rang false or to ask 'Who laughs last?' At first it was flattering to one's vanity to be on the side of the sceptics; and when the novelty began to wear off there was nowhere else to go: for as yet there was on the Christian side 'no voice, nor any that answered.' To me, still smiling sardonically, came the boisterous and brilliant faith of Mr. Chesterton, turning the tables on the heretics and exploding their paper castles with a splutter of fireworks. Hitherto the unbelievers had had a monopoly of wit if not of wisdom: all

the fun of the game had been with them. The poor old church had been a sorry victim under the supple rapiers of its assailants. Now, with the antics of a knockabout comedian and a shrewd skill with the quarter-staff, a modern Friar Tuck had come roaring to the rescue. It might not be so subtle; there was nothing of the gentleman duellist about the new arrival; but when he saw a head he hit it hard:

> 'His hand like a windy hammer-stroke;
> Men could not count the crests he broke,
> So fast the crests went down.'

It was glorious sport: whatever our beliefs we rocked with delight. And behind the harlequinade was more virile stuff: in the epigrams rang out, now and then, a clear voice speaking truth. And this man at least was not afraid to talk as if God were real. Whatever the value of his philosophy, at least he took religion so seriously that he could hardly speak about anything else, so seriously that he could laugh without cynicism.

If *Heretics* set me thinking more favourably about Christianity, a still deeper impression was made by a very different event. There is a phase, a right and natural phase, in which religion is not a life to be lived or an experience to be shared, but a problem to be discussed. It is the privilege of the student to test existence intellectually. Unless he is to spend his days in leading-strings he must learn to use his eyes and choose his road: in doing so he will challenge all authorities and question all traditions, that he may see things for

himself and form his opinions at first-hand. It is justifiable at first for a teacher to feed children with a spoon, and for them to open their minds and let him fill them. Later on he must encourage them to forage for themselves, even though they find the diet indigestible. It is a sin against growth for a church to restrict its members to milk and slops, to compel them to take their faith on trust: they must learn to question and examine: the Father's love gives His prodigals their liberty. But when they have gone out on the search, it is not by argument alone that they will make their discoveries. The ultimate evidence for Christianity is not its reasonableness but the type of personality that it produces in its disciples. When we have exhausted all our logic, the fact of saintliness, the fragrance and sincerity and power of simple Christians, will remain unexplained and compelling our admiration. If it was the characters of the clergy and church-workers that had first repelled me, it was a parson who was mainly instrumental in bringing me back.

He was a famous preacher, one of those whose most foolish sayings were good copy for the halfpenny press. Just before his visit to Cambridge he had commented enthusiastically upon one of the worst sensational novels ever published, and his praise had been widely circulated for purposes of advertisement. Obviously such a man would be entertaining. I went to scoff. The sermon was as an argument puerile: like Wilfrid Lambert of glorious memory he 'had the honourable excuse.' But the man was aflame, radiating a power of loving that filled his simple words with

meaning and with an atmosphere of worship. Here was a man not only passionately convinced of his gospel, but, for whatever the words mean, God-possessed. To account for his influence in terms of the grey matter of his brain was absurd: how else could it be explained? Materialism did not seem to supply a very satisfactory theory. Here surely was the real Christianity, that had changed the course of human history: if this man were deluded, I should almost be content to share his delusion. The scoffer stayed to pray.

Certainly by this time I had begun to realise that religion could not be brushed aside, that although the scientific objections were strong and many of the beliefs of Christians incredible, there was need to enquire far more closely. Like my contemporaries I had assumed that Christianity belonged to the old order, that its doctrines were irreconcilable with modern knowledge, and its survival merely an instance of the power of old-established custom, or as some suggested a safeguard against social upheaval supported until stronger guardians of the king's peace could be found. Certainly what I had seen of it had warranted me in rejecting it: there was much in its popular presentation that I could never bring myself to accept. But the fact remained that it had a power greater than I had realised, that the arguments which had seemed fatal were less convincing than I had thought, and that in any case Jesus was far too significant an influence upon history and even apparently on modern men to be brushed aside. Perhaps the condemnation had been too hasty; perhaps there was more in it than church-going. If the three

years of wandering had led to little else they had at least convinced me of the importance and of the interest of the search. I could not accept the position of the practical person for whom 'everything matters except everything.' It might be impossible to make sense of life: life was not worth living until the attempt to do so had been made.

I was in fact in a very favourable position for the quest: for my future was wholly undecided, and I was free to choose my work. Going up to Cambridge, I had assumed that I should in due course follow my father as a barrister: but till my Classical Tripos was over, there was no need to bother about law. In my second year my father was taken seriously ill, and warned me that another attack might occur and would probably be fatal. Having a brother still at school, I should in that case have had to coin my brains in the best market: the bar was hardly possible: we should want money urgently and at once. The anxiety did not last long; my father made a complete recovery; but the break had made it plain that I had no real desire to be a lawyer. Indeed, in my heart of hearts, there was already one vague ambition, to be the dean of a college in the university —a queer fancy for one who could not then have called himself a Christian, but fostered by my admiration for the lay dean of Caius. And after all the dream came true!

So when the Tripos results were announced and my scholarships were continued I had every reason to stay up for a fourth year and try to qualify by another First for a fellowship. It must be admitted that I surveyed the possible subjects with

this in mind and an eye to my own limitations, rejecting Classics and not daring to attempt Natural Science. Inclination suggested Divinity; and in the Fourth Section of the Second Part of the Tripos was a syllabus exactly suited, as I judged, to my capacity. It was Dogmatics with large slabs of Greek and Latin Fathers, a period of modern doctrine, and enough history and philosophy to balance the linguistic papers. Reading for it I should at least discover what Christianity had meant in its early days; and if there was a kernel in the husk, such studies should enable me to disclose it.

That last year before my degree had been by far the happiest since childhood. At first the exigencies of an unannounced engagement were rather unsettling. We lived within a few yards of one another. Colleges are hot-beds of gossip: my best friend and one or two dons knew what was afoot; how long would our secret be preserved? On Fridays I was allowed to spend the afternoon at the Lodge; and I could call with the crowd on Sundays. Yet when at last the news was published, a prominent member of my own year lost a 'fiver' by a reckless bet that I was really engaged to someone else. He revenged himself by dashing off to the station, securing some labels, and plastering my rooms inside and out with the fateful word. During the May term stimulated by the constant humour of my 'double life,' I had been editing the *Granta*, and this with the college magazine, a Tripos (for which a belated effort was essential), plenty of picnics and cricket, and innumerable societies grave and gay

kept me busy. It was good training in the art of living at full pressure, but left little time for thought or quiet.

Leisure and peace of soul came in the Long Vacation, and with them a chance of real study. Those months saw me entering upon the two avenues along which ever since I have tried to follow the quest of God.

The first of these had been marked out long ago. Natural history had been my hobby from childhood, and as an undergraduate I had spent most of my vacations in pursuit of moths. Two of my closest friends were keen collectors, one, an old Rugbeian, being a scientist of brilliant parts. Together we explored the insect-wealth of the fen-land: the blackthorn of Warboys and Monk's Wood, the poplars and willow holts of Somersham, the reed-beds of Chatteris, the hemp-agrimony of Chippenham, the rock-roses and sainfoin of the Devil's Dyke, and the varied flora of Wicken gave us our quarry in abundance; and the local races and melanic forms of Lepidoptera raise questions of heredity not easily answered. Of the scientific side of our work there is little to say. Moth-collecting is a sport, not a scientific pursuit; and its value, if small for the biologist, is in other ways inestimable. But intellectually it brought me face to face with the issue which more than any other made religion difficult for me, the deterministic theories of heredity championed so vigorously by Professor Bateson. During the next two years I attended courses of lectures on Genetics and spent many hours of an afternoon in the laboratories. For it seemed to me

then, and despite the critics it seems to me still, that if there is no room at all for use-inheritance in evolution, if our whole physical make-up is strictly conditioned by the immutable germ-plasm, and if therefore our struggles and hard-won virtues have no effect whatever upon the course of development, then to speak of the Creator as in any real sense the Father is impossible : Calvinism of so rigid a sort as to be irreconcilable with Christianity is the only possible theology.

But it was aesthetic (I had almost written spiritual) worth that I appreciated most in my moth-hunting. To spend a night alone in a summer woodland or a stretch of unspoiled fen is to experience an initiation into the life of the contemplative. Orthodox methods of meditation do not appeal to me : they produce boredom or coma —and platitudes. I can meditate best when there is something to occupy me without absorbing my interest, something which leaves the mind free to roam, to grapple with a difficulty, to disengage for a moment, and then to return to the encounter with fresh zest. That is why I can write best in a train, where a glance at the moving landscape will supply a new start to my ideas ; and would, for choice, compose a sermon in a garden when the ' mechanic exercise ' of digging out a plantain often gives a change of angle to one's thinking. Mothing is the perfect pursuit for such a temperament. One chooses a round of trees or posts, and paints it with sugar in the twilight ; and then with lamp and pill-boxes wanders dreamily round it, sufficiently alert to spot a desirable specimen at once, sufficiently detached to let one's thoughts

play freely over the larger problems of life. The stillness and solitude, the mystery stretching beyond the little splash of light, the unhurried motion as one saunters from tree to tree, the concentration of one's senses upon the business of collecting, even the occasional break in the chain of ideas when a rarity brings one's mind to attention for its capture—all this is to me occasion for the purest refreshment and the richest adventuring of the spirit. It is of course splendidly purgative : one gets rid of all the little worries and fears and lusts and ambitions : they are sloughed off without effort as the quiet closes in, and reveals the falsity and ugliness and inconsistency of superficial living. But it is much more than this : one becomes aware of a truer perspective and a wider horizon, sensitive to influences usually obscured by the clamour of the senses, and alert to follow up random clues, bare wisps of thought, trifling hints of experience to their conclusions, and to revise one's outlook in accordance with them. And the surroundings are sacraments as rich in efficacy as any that can be found in temples made with hands. The tracery of the branches against the stars, the dim vista of the glade, the soundless flight of a night-jar, the eerie noises that testify to the hidden life of the woodland—nature speaks her secrets through them, secrets that cannot be uttered in the daylight. Or still better, on an open fen where there is nothing but the dome of the sky and the empty level of earth, save the murmuring of the reeds, and sometimes the squeak of a bat and the flicker of its wings. A wood may speak of life : the fens speak only of eternity.

Standing alone in their immensity you are in the presence chamber of the infinite, and an ancient awe whispers of panic and makes trial of the fibre of your manhood. You are stripped stark: excuses, vanities, sophistries are unavailing; only the elemental simplicities remain. No one can know what nature means until he has spent such a vigil alone and in the night: in the day-time the grandeur of her massed effect is concealed by the lavish wealth of form and colour, the glamour and fascination of each smallest detail; in the darkness the main lines of the whole are manifest, and make their appeal to the same qualities in yourself. There is a wealth of meaning in the cryptic sayings which declare that God dwells in thick darkness and that in the darkness the Son of Man is revealed.

During that vacation there was need for study as well as leisure for natural history. My knowledge of theology was minute, and I was attempting to take in one year what most students take in two. So for the mornings I had to stick to books. Knowing little it was almost at random that I decided to begin with a careful study of St. Paul and therefore with the Epistle to the Romans. The Bishop of Gloucester has said severe things about me since then, and would not, I am afraid, be glad to welcome me as a disciple. But the debt that I owe to him for his share in the great commentary on that Epistle is one that can never be forgotten. At school the thought of the Apostle had never been explained to me: indeed I had no notion that there was a vital and intelligible experience behind his words. Of the significance of what he calls faith, of the inwardness

of his struggle against the law, of his knowledge of the indwelling Christ I had no conception at all. The Epistles had been so much Greek to be construed; attention was directed to local customs, disputed readings, solecisms in grammar. So the discovery that in his 'scheme of salvation' a real man was speaking about a real experience which I could understand and in my little way apply to my own life was a startling revelation. This account of the love of Jesus and of its power to permeate a man's whole being and transform him might not be true to fact; I had no criterion by which to decide: but as a theory it 'made sense.' If Jesus were living and divine, then His influence would quite naturally act in this way. If Jesus lives, then the corollary 'I live, yet not I: Christ lives in me' would be obvious. If Jesus were God, then here was our life in God, our atonement, our redemption. The simplicity of it was as amazing as the grandeur, or impudence, of its claim. The fundamental question 'What think ye of Christ?' must still be faced; there lay the crux of the matter. Given St. Paul's answer to it, his doctrine of re-birth, of the life of the Spirit and of membership in the body of Christ followed almost as a matter of course. If only I had been able to find a similar answer or even to concentrate upon that single issue, my journey to discipleship might have been much shortened.

My main subject was however not the New Testament, but the history and doctrine of the Early Church, and detailed study of the Gospels lay too far from its scope to be practicable. The

year that followed was devoted to Patristics. And if in many ways its effect was invaluable, it did not make easier an acceptance of traditional ecclesiasticism. Of course the evidence of the power of Christianity, of the magnitude of its achievement, and of the unearthly splendour of its first disciples was enormously impressive. Here was a quality of personality that compelled admiration, that thrilled one into humility and thankfulness. Here was an influence so obvious and so worshipful that its source must have been such as the Gospels describe. To suggest that Jesus never existed, or that He was a peasant-prophet, or a crazy dreamer, was to posit a cause wholly incapable of producing the effects to which history testified. In approaching the New Testament from the standpoint of a historian rather than a textual critic, I came to it expecting, nay convinced, that the person by whom such vast changes were made possible must be unique in spiritual power: nothing less would account for the religion of which He was founder and head.

And in the great line of Greek Apologists, culminating in Clement and Origen, was a succession of scholars and thinkers whom a modern could appreciate. They were men who shared the liberal and scientific outlook upon nature and human history; men quick to acclaim all progress as of God and to welcome as Christians before Christ the sages of Greece and the heroes of Israel; men whose breadth of knowledge and boldness of speculation were wholly free from the conventionalities of pietism or the desire to reach a foreordained conclusion. In them were ideas relevant

to my needs and a point of view that swept me into enthusiastic agreement. How completely their work harmonised with my own may be proved by a significant fact. In the essay paper of the Tripos I hesitated between two subjects, 'Darwinism and Theology' and 'The Bearing of the Logos Doctrine upon Modern Theories of the Person of Christ.' I started on the former—wrote three pages—decided that the latter was my real concern—started again, and incorporated without alteration into my final script the pages I had written for its predecessor. And the examiners gave me a 'star' on the strength of that essay.

Yet Origen had been condemned as a heretic by the church which some regarded as infallible. Socrates, the Church historian, might well remark that 'men of observation and intelligence cannot be deceived as to how these things were done and are continually being done': but jealousy, meanness, party-spirit, and defamation of spiritual and intellectual worth were curious fruits of the Holy Ghost. Origen was anathema: that was hard to accept. And Cyril of Alexandria was a canonised saint: that was intolerable. Gibbon might declare that 'the title of *saint* is a mark that his opinions and his party have finally prevailed': even this is uncertain; for he was an Apollinarian without the courage or consistency of Apollinarius: in any case it is the only excuse possible. No one can study the period without admitting that Cyril was a master of intrigue, of fraud and bribery, of violence and cruelty, without honesty, without honour, a man driven to the basest courses by

pride and ambition, a disciple of Lucifer rather than of Jesus. To accept the infallibility of the society which canonised him was and is for me a thing utterly inconceivable. And the special pleading of his advocates only adds discredit to a case already indefensible. If eternal salvation depended upon membership in such a church and the acceptance of such a verdict, then like the old Goth I would go to hell with my own people, to hell with Origen rather than to heaven with St. Cyril.

It was perhaps unfortunate that my first impressions of the church should have been crystallised into this form, and that the usual arguments of the Catholic did little to alter my conviction. It was no doubt true that the efficacy of a sacrament did not depend upon the character of the celebrant; that the church must be a mixed society; or even that its survival, considering the wickedness of some of the popes, was proof of its supernatural resources. But after all, for me and for most of us, the chief testimony to the truth of Christianity was in its influence upon human lives: if the church failed to produce saints, if it gave the title to men whose only claim was worldly success, then either the basis of my faith in the adequacy of Jesus was threatened or the church differed widely from Christianity. I had no sympathy with Protestantism: my upbringing had inclined me to the Catholic party; yet its attitude towards the divine society and the inerrant creeds was frankly irreconcilable with a candid examination of the Councils or the history of the fifth century.

There was a further circumstance that served to put me out of sympathy with Catholicism. It is a tale of ingratitude on my part, and I recall it with shame mingling with a naughty amusement: but for those who would train the young in religion it is full of warning. Now that I was reading theology, it was natural that I should meet the Christian societies in the university, and my chief acquaintance was with the small group of Anglo-Catholics. They were extraordinarily kind to me, bearing generously with my ignorance and guiding me in my studies. Only they could not leave me to find my own way to their fold. And when once I realised that propagandism was in the air, I became suspicious. If there is one thing that the average Englishman hates, it is to be treated as a likely proselyte; and I had walked alone and had no intention of being captured unless I loved my captors. The bird looked on with glee while the snare was set for him.

Their final mistake was a small one: but the wound of it went deep. Their habit was to ask suitable students to go for a walk. I was invited first by one, and then by a second. In each case the routine was the same. Conversation started with boats or the Union or some safe and conventional topic. It drew round to the Church and the Eucharist. Then when we were nearing home, suddenly my companion made his frontal attack, selecting the sexual difficulties of a young man as his gambit. I let him talk: he did, discreetly, but assuming that of course I was heavily tainted. And when my silence encouraged him to proceed, came the inevitable remedy. Let me

adopt the practice of regular confession, and all would be well. I should get relief and strength.

I am sure that it was kindly meant—though at the time I boiled with rage at what seemed an unwarranted impertinence. Many, perhaps most, of us are worried with solitary vice; to talk the thing out with a friend who knows and loves us is a very real help: no doubt some of us would welcome an opportunity, even from a comparative stranger. In me the whole method produced an effect of indignant repulsion: first it seemed contemptible to play on the morbidities of the callow in order to frighten them into religion; then it appeared to reveal a rather unpleasant obsession in my companion, who after all was only a new acquaintance; thirdly I was in the hey-day of a man's first love, and the temptations ascribed to me had long ago ceased to trouble me, and at the time simply did not enter into my life at all. It was this last that hurt. The good man was not treating me as a person and a friend: otherwise he would have found out how I felt. To him I was merely a case; one more patient to be treated by the universal panacea; one more name to be entered on his list of cures. I learned from it one lesson which every parson should lay to heart, that to do a man good when you do not love him is to outrage his personality and to exploit him in your own interest; and another hardly less valuable, that fear and shame are not motives to which a Christian should appeal in presenting his faith. But it gave me a distrust of Catholic proselytising and of the confessional which was almost certainly

unjust, but which even now I cannot think wholly unjustifiable.

The chief influence upon me during that year was a don of another college, a layman, a theologian of brilliant originality, and one of the most generous friends I have ever known. He was married, and my fiancée and I spent many hours at his home or in his boat on the river. He first helped me to understand the Gospels; for his own faith, heterodox in some respects, was broad based upon a fearless study of the life and times of Jesus. And Jesus as he described Him lived and moved: familiar scenes grew rich in meaning; cryptic sayings were illuminated; difficult incidents were explained. In only one other case have I known a similar combination of wide and accurate scholarship with imagination and the power to clothe a hackneyed tale in fresh and vivid realism. Here was a range of knowledge that embraced the whole field of Semitic, Biblical and Hellenistic records, a flair for the apt illustration that would throw a new light upon old problems, an audacity never content to leave a difficulty unsolved, an enthusiasm that would pour out its treasures without stint for the sheer joy of sharing them with others. Here too was a faith utterly free from cant or convention, a passion for truth which would accept no formula as final, a religion which welcomed all knowledge calling nothing common or unclean, and a life simple, humble, friendly, ready to spend its last ounce of strength or money for any who needed help. In the eighteen months of my intimacy with him he gave me a new conception both of scholarship and of

Christianity. When he burnt himself out early in his career and had to leave Cambridge, his loss was irreparable. Intellectually there is no one to whom I owe more, and in other respects the debt is hardly less.

So when in due course I finished with examinations, was given a studentship, and knew that a fellowship would almost certainly follow, my future was clear. I would be a lay student of theology, free from all tests and ecclesiastical trammels, searching out my answer to the problem of the nature and meaning of Jesus. Ordination was not yet in my mind, though it had of course been earnestly suggested. And the reasons were good. I had as yet little sympathy with the church or respect for its activities; and for myself no desire for what is called 'ministerial work': I was essentially lay in outlook, habits, and conversation, vastly interested in human beings, but in no way desiring to lead or exhort them. Then I had yet to solve the biological problems, or at least to convince myself that Mendelian determinism was not so universal as to leave no room for the sort of God whom Jesus preached. And, finally, though I was enormously impressed both by the records of the Master and by His influence on mankind, and had decided that so far as I could estimate it the evidence for his survival of death stood firm, I had no actual first-hand experience of Him as a living and present reality. I wanted to study, and if possible serve religion; was no longer in doubt of the existence of God; was satisfied that so far as doctrine went I was not far from accepting an orthodox or sufficiently

orthodox position. But this was not enough. And ordination was so plainly to my advantage that I could not consider it unless the call commanded an entire and disinterested consent.

It may seem strange that with the desire to get married, with the need for money, and with a wide circle of interests to follow, I did not turn directly to an easier and more lucrative career. I had, in fact, dallied with the offer of a post on the staff of a great newspaper and with the idea of a mastership at a public school; but Cambridge and theology outweighed them. My fiancée and I were both young; after the first nine months our engagement had not involved the strain that long waiting is supposed to entail; her trust encouraged me to follow my bent. Moreover, in those days, there was still at the back of my mind the idea that secular work was if not irreligious at least definitely more so than the study of sacred subjects—a survival from the bad old days when life was cut up into compartments and one or two professions were appropriated to the service of God. Later on, when I had realised that religion could not be confined to the study of the theologian or the pulpit of the preacher, that all life was sacramental and every honest calling a ministry, my decision might have been different. But I doubt it. Once when I went to have my hair cut in a strange shop and in very unclerical attire, the barber looked critically at me and said 'You were meant to be a parson.' I still look the typical 'pale young curate'—growing a little older now—and I daresay the man was right.

III. AN OFFICE IN LIVERPOOL

'Allons! the road is before us!'

If any proof were needed that, despite the psychologists, the story of a human life is altogether too large for exact analysis, he might find it in the contrast between the pictures of that life as they appear to him who has lived it and to his biographers. No man, be he lawyer, doctor, priest, or poet can correctly describe the real history of another. He must start with the facts or such of them as he knows, and from them build up his interpretation of character, and the facts are always insufficient and usually misleading. What, after all, do we learn about a man from the record contained in his obituary? That he was born of parents in a particular locality and status, went to a named school and university, took certain examinations, entered upon a chosen career, performed a series of more or less important actions, wrote such and such books, married, begat children, left a mass of letters, and a number of sorrowing friends; what does all this tell us? Even when we have met and known him, though we can learn more by a single meeting than by an article in the Dictionary of National Biography, and if

our acquaintance lead to friendship can estimate his qualities perhaps more accurately than he can himself, the real man is still hidden. The little events that determine the growth of the soul, the secret memories that colour his mentality, the hidden springs from which arise his motives and his actions, these no friend however intimate can fully know.

Looking back over our own years we can see how seldom those happenings which others reckon important have been more than trivial episodes, how circumstances which ought to have exerted enormous influence have hardly produced any effect at all, how people who claim to have been responsible for our education have never touched the depths of our being; and on the other hand how occurrences so casual as to be at the time neglected, chance conversations, sudden glimpses, momentary impressions have endured and altered the whole bent of our lives. The world despises what it calls small things. Historians are concerned with externals, wars and constitutions, policies and mass movements, economic changes and social conditions. The real life of men and nations goes necessarily unchronicled. The slow and silent growth, the intimate communings with nature and God, the hopes and fears, the dreams and experiences that underlie and determine action, of these even the wisest can form no true judgment. Yet it is these that make us what we are.

It is of course the sole excuse for these papers that they are concerned only with what seems to me to have been important; and in that catalogue the

facts usually put on record have little place. A sunset is more significant than a success, a friend than all the influences of the great, a sudden enlightenment than years of study for examinations. For me, and I fancy for most of us, the dramatic happenings that we expect to remember often pass utterly into oblivion : the crises of our careers did not come in them. Tiny things, utterly unnoticed by an observer, are the tools by which our shape and destiny are graven. Outward conditions after all matter singularly little : the finest stuff of human nature can be found as readily in a cottage as in a palace. For the soul of a man is fashioned by means more subtle than money can buy.

Yet there are times in every man's journey when he chooses his path in obedience less to the demands of his own nature than to a summons from without, times when we can recognise that if a change of scene had not been offered and taken our whole course and outlook would have been different. It is a false philosophy that ascribes to environment the whole development of character, for it is always our reaction to it, and not the surroundings themselves, that matters. But, for all that, what is commonly called our career has on occasion a deep significance for our growth, and the facts that a chronicler would record are also events in the life of the soul.

In my own case I have seldom tried to alter my sphere of work on my own initiative, and have never succeeded in doing so, except when I applied for an army chaplaincy. All other changes have come unexpectedly and by invitation from others. And on no occasion has it taken me an

hour to decide upon it. Indeed the call has always brought an immediate knowledge that I must accept or decline.

The first of these came in the middle of the autumn term after my second Tripos. My advisers had urged me to go to Berlin, to learn German and read with Harnack: but I had returned to Cambridge to sit for the George Williams prize and to begin a thesis on Apollinarius of Laodicea. Clearly it was wise for me to use the year or so before the fellowship election for a visit to Germany: but I was unwilling to do so, partly from fear of strange places and a foreign tongue, partly because I was getting rather bored with academic life and found the prospect of a further period as a student distasteful, and partly because desiring to be in a position to marry it was unsafe to count solely upon a fellowship. No reason weighed heavily, and I should doubtless have gone but for a sudden summons to the Appointments Board, where it was suggested to me that I should apply for a post as Assistant Secretary for Secondary Education under the Liverpool City Council. The salary was meagre; the prospects as uncertain as my own fitness for the work; my family and friends would obviously regard it as a disastrous mistake. I asked for twenty-four hours in which to decide, left the Board, walked a hundred yards, returned and requested the secretary to send in my name. At the time I hardly knew why I had done so: it was, I think, mainly the conviction that if I was ever going to be of any use in the world I must break away from the public school and university tradition and get a wider experience.

I had definitely chosen educational work as my future : the new municipal and state schools were bound to play a large part in that future ; Liverpool was a good centre in which to study them at first hand. That the choice was right, I have no doubt : had I realised that it would wholly change my way of life, I should nevertheless have taken it. A month later I settled into rooms in Canning Street and, less easily, into the routine of work in an office.

The year that followed was utterly unlike my expectations, and was probably the crucial period of my life, though here too the influences actually important were not at all those which an observer would have noticed.

In the first place the complete change of surroundings and status, though unpleasant, was certainly beneficial. Cambridge had been sheer joy. In my last two years I had made a large circle of friends all over the university, and through my engagement met many distinguished visitors to it. There was never a lonely moment : I was the spoiled child of fortune, and beginning to feel myself a person of some importance—was indeed suffering badly from ' swelled head.' As such it was extraordinarily salutary to be flung into dingy lodgings in a great city, where nobody cared what I did with myself outside office-hours, where at first I was miserably lonely, and where the people with whom I was in contact were unlike any I had met before. At my work I was grossly incompetent, not knowing the difference between a file and a duplicator, nor how to use a telephone, or dictate letters, or prepare agenda, or manage

committees. These things can be learned : but I never lived down the contempt with which my office-boy regarded me during the first few weeks. My seniors were very long-suffering, though they must have found it difficult to keep me employed ; the city magnates were kind, but as befits great men dealing with a junior and salaried official ; the local university and the schools regarded me as a commercial person concerned not with education but with the supply of desks and stationery ; and my duties, even when I mastered them, were monotonous and, to one who had no liking for administrative work, incredibly dull. But how good, how very good, it is to sojourn in the wilderness and wrestle with the devils of wounded vanity and the temptations of unsheltered youth.

Far more important to my future was the friend whose help was my salvation. We met by the merest accident. I was working hard at Lepidoptera, trying to clear up my views of heredity and determinism. He was a well-known authority. I wrote to him, was invited to his house, and spent three evenings a week for the rest of the year in his company. At first moths were our concern : he was an expert with the microscope, and shared his knowledge with me. Then he told me of a boy's club and Sunday School of which he was the mainstay, took me to it, and made me responsible for a class. It was a queer place—a large empty warehouse in the slums behind Bold Street, roughly fitted up with platform and gymnastic apparatus, and on club nights seething with boys of all ages, from barefooted verminous children to hefty young athletes

of eighteen. On Sunday evenings there was a huge undenominational children's service: the place was crammed with waifs, crammed to the doors, and the odour was like that of an Irish cattle-boat in a rough sea. We sang hymns thrown onto a sheet, hymns of a desolating protestantism: there were prayers and an address, devout, scriptural, but to me usually meaningless. Yet in the old Colosseum, while I was struggling incompetently to instruct youngsters tougher than myself on the horizontal bar, or to reduce to silence rows of obstreperous infants, God came far nearer than he had ever done in a cathedral. For beneath cant phrases and old-fashioned pietism here was a flame of devotion, a passionate love of the children, a real if unintelligent testimony to the influence of Jesus Christ. I owe to it a debt that can never be repaid. It gave me the knowledge of the joy and worth of such service. And it gave me, what hitherto I had had no chance of learning, an unbounded belief in God's poor, and an agony of indignation that such magnificent material should be so thwarted and misused. It sounds ungrateful to the wealthy of Liverpool, on whom of a Sunday afternoon I was allowed to call, to say that I escaped from the gorgeousness of their drawing-rooms to the reek of the Colosseum with the knowledge that they who have riches are even more gravely handicapped in their quest of the kingdom of God.

Three other circumstances helped to bring about what must, I think, be called my conversion; and they must be mentioned before the inner history of the year can be described.

The first was the influence of some cousins with whom I spent occasional week-ends. They were Roman Catholics ; and in my early days in Liverpool, when the strain of loneliness and the need for religion were very great, made a strong though transitory appeal to me. When you are wrestling with problems so difficult as to seem insoluble, when you yearn for God and cannot find Him, then the voice which says ' Lay aside your conceit : be humble and listen to the authority of the Church : here is God, accept and obey ' comes with a singular appeal. How wonderful to be able to still the pain and sink back like a child onto its mother's breast ; to feel the support of an august tradition ; to be free from the perils and responsibilities of individualism ; to get rid of speculation and be able to turn to more practical tasks ! Rome can offer much to the lonely and the bewildered. It is not surprising that many pay the price that she demands. For me the sacrifice was impossible : what I was being offered was in fact suicide. My work on Apollinarius, to which three nights a week were given, was meaningless if the Roman claims were tolerable. But to one who had known little of the need for a church, the glimpse of what it could be was precious. Religion need not be Roman : it must not be individualistic.

Next was the influence of an Adult School in Birkenhead, to which on Sunday mornings I was sometimes carried off by a friend on the staff of the university. Till then, save once for a bet at the Cambridge Union Society, I had never spoken in public ; and I am glad to think that my first

lecture was on evolution, and my first religious address delivered in the hall of a Congregational church. The discussions at the school were magnificent: it was a great discovery when I found how keen and how sincere were the members, and realised how very little I had to give to them.

Finally there was a visit to my friend of college days, who had now taken orders and was a curate at Stoke-on-Trent. Liverpool has its squalid streets, and I was used to slums. But for brute ugliness Stoke and its vast and dismal churchyard stand unique. My friend was ill: I wandered up to his rooms alone, and the grim tragedy of the place struck me cold with misery. He had loved the country, and music, and all beautiful things: and he was living in this hell. I found him, and behold he was not alone. No other phrase will express it. Here walking with him in the midst of the furnace was Jesus: and its flames were an aureole. He had found that which together we had sought.

With these events to help me, the year was full of development. At the start there came a great enrichment of what must, I suppose, be called mystic experience. Hitherto my glimpses of the eternal had been associated only with nature, sunsets and moonlight, flowers and birds. Now of an evening I took long and solitary walks; for at Cambridge I had played cricket and fives regularly, and exercise was necessary after a day at a desk. And on my walks in the mean streets God, as I had learned to call Him, met me, in splendour. Always the sense of His presence was unexpected,

even startling in the suddenness of its manifestation ; always it had the same effect of exhilaration and enlargement ; but now the meaning and poignancy of it were more plain, and the ' little people,' as at such times I called mankind, were transfigured by it and made infinitely dear. Not only was the earth full of the glory of the Lord, but humanity, the crowded folk of the city, were His family, each and all in His keeping.

Two such moments were specially important to me. The first was at a time when the zealots for purity had been writing to the press to protest against the immorality of behaviour in the public parks. I turned out of my rooms and noticed a young couple obviously love-making on a seat by the roadside on St. James' Mount. There was, I am afraid, a taint of pruriency in my scrutiny : if so, I stood rebuked. For round them was the authentic Shechinah, the blaze of the ' cloud of fire ' ; and to me an overwhelming knowledge that ' God was in this place.' I had dared to think meanly of the boys and girls who had to enjoy their courtships in the open air—I who had privacy for my own love in a room which none of the family would enter except with due warning and after a discreet interval. Why after all should man and maid be ashamed of the one splendid thing in their youth ? And if passion was sometimes too strong and they fell, who was I that I should cast a stone—I who had done nothing to help them to decent homes or to shelter their comradeship from temptation ? Of a certainty God had not despised them ; of a certainty sex was not, need not be, a thing of shame. Brought up,

as I had been, in an atmosphere of reticence, and acquainted at school with coarseness and ribaldry of speech, it was grand to have my own discovery of the joyous purity of love so reinforced and extended.

The second was later. I was coming home after a long tramp and passed a crowd of shawl-clad women gathered round a dingy shop. The proprietor, in his shirt-sleeves, was dispensing packets of fish and chips wrapped in newspaper. The place was lit with naphtha flares, and misty with steam from his cooking; and the smell of damp humanity and stale food was heavy in the air. And again of a sudden the glory; and God fulfilling his eternal task, giving to His children their daily bread. The mothers of the poor, yes and the huckster behind the counter, were His ministers, celebrating together an ancient and sacred rite. I have had to talk many dozens of times since about commerce and industry: my hopes for them, my faith in them, were formed that night in a flash of vision. Men might make such traffic sordid and profane: it was not so, but a liturgy, and its celebrants had a high and holy calling.

So when I came to my bare-footed little gymnasts it was with eyes that had been opened to new beauties in the common people. And no decent youngster, least of all a young man in love, can resist the appeal of the children of the slums. So charming they are with their cheeky fearless ways, their precocious quickness of observation and comment and repartee, their infinite promise to which rags and dirt only serve as a foil. And

here and there among them an infant with the beauty of an angel and the grace of a flower; or another, wizened and stunted and sad-eyed, who when at last you win his confidence looks you in the face, and the lines smoothe out into dimples, and the tragic figure is transformed into a smiling cherub. And the pathos, the wicked waste and shame of it! You see them a few years later, and unemployment and bad habits and premature liberty and the carelessness and cruelty of the world have made them loutish and surly and brutal. A Circe has laid a spell on them, and instead of the sons of men there is only a herd of swine. Is there no magic that will restore the lost promise and bring it to fulfilment? Can the church do nothing to lessen this maiden tribute paid to ill-organised industry and to the folly which squanders most of the fruits of education by sending children of fourteen out unprotected into the labour market?

Folks talk rapturously of the maternal instinct and the wonder of a woman's care for the little ones. In me, and I suppose in every young man, small boys stir a sense of fatherhood, appealing to what is best in us for help and such guidance as we can give. Hitherto I had had no desire for ministry: I had lived among equals or elders: friendship, not the care of those weaker and less equipped than myself, was all that I had known. Now, with the fascination of these gallant youngsters winding round my heart-strings and the tragedy of their need constantly illustrated, a new desire for a life of service began to haunt me. I had been given so much: what right had I to

keep it to myself? My leisure and position had been made possible for me by others; I was of the privileged: could I take what society had bestowed, and refuse to use it for those who had no such advantages? Was it fair to put my own inclinations and my own career first, as I had done when I came up to Liverpool? My course hitherto had been planned and carried through so as to secure for myself the fullest scope; so seen, the whole business looked mean and selfish. Facing the hope and the sadness of these waifs' existence I was ashamed, bitterly ashamed, of myself and my doings. And that was not all. This new experiment, incompetent as I was at it, was pure joy. When once the first shyness had worn off, and we began to feel at home together, there was a happiness in the club nights of a quite new kind. It was not at all that I felt myself to be useful: there was no taint of self-righteousness about it. But the whole atmosphere was so jolly, the affection of the kiddies was so compelling, the delight in their progress was so good, the comradeship of the workers was so close that I looked forward to it with a thrill of pleasure. Fellowship of such a sort had not come my way, fellowship in which one's brains and position, one's ambitions and fears, ceased to matter, fellowship in which the welfare of the children came first and all the artificial distinctions of class and book-learning were done away. We were just a big family: I was one of the weakest of its members, but I was welcome and belonged to it, and in it could get away from externals to elementals. Here was a way of life singularly attractive to one who had

been brought up in a simple home and then plunged into a sophisticated culture which at times seemed little more than an elaborate pose. What, after all, had the study of patristic theology, or the working out of estimates for the educational needs of the schools, or the pursuit of knowledge or money to offer that could be compared for sheer joy of living to these evenings with the children of the slums! Here was human nature in the raw, human nature infinitely responsive. You might spend a life-time on ancient heresies and leave a dusty tome as the result; here every hour had its result in happiness and growth, every week meant so much health and development for the children. Here was life no longer at second-hand, life freed from conventions and snobbishnesses and unrealities, life simplified and direct. Its appeal was irresistible.

So it was that the first conscious desire to serve came to me, as it has come to multitudes of others, from contact with poverty. Having once seen the need it was impossible to be satisfied with a career of administrative work in education where one had direct touch only with committees and estimates, statistics and equipment. Somehow I must get quit of the office: the only question was how to choose another sphere.

The real need was to be free, not only for a more direct sort of service but for the kind of personal relationships which the boys' club revealed. I was ill-fitted for organisation, had neither the methodical habits nor the orderly mind; the routine was mechanical, there was no scope for freedom, and business was conducted

officially and impersonally. Here with these children it was all a matter of personality and friendship. Such work was not a duty, but a delight; no one bothered about dignity or precedents or correct procedure; there was no time for criticism or self-consciousness; we were living not as machines but as human beings in a fellowship held together by affection and a common loyalty. Hitherto I had thought of the church in terms of its formal services, of its doctrines and ritual, its societies and guilds, as an institution with officers and an elaborate routine. Now it suddenly dawned on me that here was the real church, here in the dirty old warehouse, which all the godly clergy of Liverpool despised. 'That's the place where they give the children bread; they throw it about in the streets afterwards,' sneered a parson's wife to whom I had told the secret of my Sunday evenings. Here was the real church, alive with love as it had been in the days of the Catacombs; buried among the outcasts, scorned by the wise and wealthy. What matter if its theology was antiquated: these men might profess to believe in hell, but at least they gave me heaven. I could not accept their doctrines, but they never asked me to accept them, and perhaps cared little for them themselves. 'It is the Spirit that profiteth': if Jesus was a myth, at least those words rang true, and here they were being fulfilled. If I could spend my life in such work and such an atmosphere, then indeed life would be a song.

I had read enough of the church of the first centuries to recognise at once its authentic quality. Bishops, orders, liturgies, creeds, forms of prayer,

tests of membership, these were after all later developments, and had sprung up when fellowship and reality waned. They were necessary and useful ; no one could deny that dogma and organisation had their place ; I should not formally choose to join an undenominational body. But the real life of the church did not consist in these things but in love and glad serving, in doing good and bearing one another's burdens, in becoming as a little child, in walking humbly with God. I could not give up my post and apply for service in the Colosseum : somehow I must earn my living and find a stipend that would keep me. But surely in a parish there would be work like this ; as a curate, I could run a Colosseum of my own and gather into it a host of youngsters like myself. There must be churches where the pomps and ceremonies mattered little, where a man could live simply among the poor without bothering about controversy or orthodoxy. I could not join even such an one yet : there were vows to take for which I was not ready. I could not yet even share fully with my friends in the Colosseum : they had a clear faith, and mine was still hazy and insecure. But some day perhaps my convictions would take shape, and then I would try to find in the church a whole-time ministry such as now filled three nights of my week. This was what the church originally was and existed to do : this was what it should still be doing. There was no other body so plainly committed to the work : if only I had the spiritual experience to share however undogmatically its faith, I would offer my life to it at once.

I had hardly formulated the issue, hardly indeed become aware of more than a restless desire for a clearer path, before the way was opened. My friend at Stoke was ill: there was a bank holiday and I could visit him. That day was decisive. He was not alone. Since I had seen him, he had found Jesus, and the effect of the discovery was manifest. His whole direction and outlook were altered under the new influence: there was joy and quiet confidence in his face, purpose in his life, sympathy and strength in all his actions. Jesus was alive and present to my friend as he had been to the eleven in the upper room. He was alive and present to me. I had studied the evidence for the resurrection with an unbeliever's critical scrutiny, and had been persuaded of its validity but not of its consequents. Now I knew. It was not a dream for Saul of Tarsus, nor for a multitude of disciples through the ages. It was no longer a dream for me: for here was the reality of it. Such is a summary of the crucial event of my life—an event which must be examined in detail.

For after such a paragraph the reader will be likely to throw up my story with a curt reference to *Elmer Gantry*. Is not this just the stock-in-trade of the professional parson, the cant associated with an atmosphere of crude revivalism, or with unenlightened days when men did not hesitate to invoke the supernatural or accept the superstitious, but unworthy of any sincere and intelligent modern? Or if he does not set me down as a deliberate charlatan, he will conclude that I have suddenly lapsed from the new world into the old.

'You are imaginative: you had been dwelling on the fantasy of Jesus: you were in a state of emotional upheaval. At such times there is often an uprush of primitive ideas from the subconscious, a reversion to an infantile mentality. Your own repressed desire for quiet and conviction suddenly externalised itself in a wish-fulfilment. Your conscious mind, unaware of the latent impulse, accepted as objective what was in fact only a projection of your inner and unrecognised will to believe.' So a friendly critic will argue, pointing perhaps to the language in which I have described my experience as proof that it was suggested by my studies of early Christianity and familiarity with conventional jargon.

As this event has been the turning-point in my life, I have naturally examined it as thoroughly and tested it as ruthlessly as I can. No one wants to build his life on an illusion, still less does he want to persuade others to accept an illusion as a fact. The matter is one of such crucial importance to me, and has so influenced my whole outlook and way of life, that if I am mistaken here my mistake is one that I have never ceased trying to discover. At risk of seeming immodest I can perhaps claim that I am not inexperienced in the weighing of evidence; as a barrister's son, I was doing so from my boyhood; as a historian, a student of criticism, and a humble worker in biology, I have been trained to look for hidden motives, to sift truth from error, and to estimate the personal equation, to observe accurately, to test my results, and to discriminate between alternative theories; and as a working parson, I am

familiar with the literature of psycho-pathology, with the vagaries of the religious temperament, and with a large number of experiences similar to my own, some of which are plainly due to suggestion or delusion. And if it be urged that no man is a fair judge in his own case, or that my own interests and position prejudice me subconsciously if not consciously, I can only reply that this may be so, but that I doubt if anyone else can know the data for a decision so well, or be more anxious to give full emphasis to possible objections or explanations.

What then can be said to make the facts more intelligible? In the first place the event does not admit of explanation in terms of a wish-fulfilment. I went to see my friend in an entirely normal state of mental and bodily health. My future was not specially preying on my nerves, although in a book like this which isolates one aspect of my life from a myriad other interests and pursuits I may appear almost morbidly concerned with religion. I went expecting to revive old memories of Cambridge, of mutual friends, of moth-collecting, of work and play. He was a man that I knew intimately: we had been together so long and so completely that his every mood and tone of voice were familiar. He said nothing about religion or the intimate side of his present work: old times, old books, old comrades, of these we spoke, not of God. But it was evident that a third person was there: I do not know how else to express it. You have probably had experience of meeting a friend after an interval and discovering that a new and dominating influence has come into his life; that he

is all the time referring his opinions to the approval of another than yourself; that he is living for that other where formerly he lived for you; that where you and he met once alone together, there is now a fresh person to be considered whose existence alters the whole orientation of his life. It is not simply that he has changed his views or character, but that another and external impulse has drawn him from his previous course. So it was in this case. Here was my friend, whose way of life I knew as accurately as an astronomer knows the path of Saturn; I could have forecast his every reaction to circumstance and foretold exactly how he would behave; and now the pull of a fresh and mighty attraction had deflected his whole orbit. Save for the effect of this new factor the man's nature remained the same; he was, and is, one of the best fellows in the world, full of commonsense, and free from any sort of sentimentality or ecclesiasticism; his movement had altered its direction; I could not be ten minutes in his company without perceiving what had happened. It was his comrade, not a projection of my own, that I encountered.

In describing it so I have tried to make plain that it was not simply my friend's transfigured self which affected me. I had met already and have often met since men in whose lives and words and aspect was manifested what Christians call the Spirit of Jesus—men who are, so to speak, reflections of His character. Here was rather the discovery that my friend was a companion, or as St. Paul called it a slave of Jesus, than that he was Christlike. Jesus was objectively real, not

subjectively realised. And as the day passed, this sense of a third person present with us extended itself to me : I was admitted to their partnership as surely as if I had been formally introduced to the newcomer. There was nothing strained or fantastic, abnormal or supernatural about it. Quite literally it was as simple and obvious as if my friend had had with him a revered and sympathetic colleague who listened to our talk and influenced our every movement by the atmosphere of his presence.

If it be urged that this is similar to what happens at a revivalist meeting when the speaker by re-iterating his belief in the nearness of Jesus works upon the suggestibility of his audience until they too claim to see and hear the Lord, I shall of course reply that this is often exactly what a revival means, that the whole performance, hymns, emotional appeals, crowded benches, periods of silence, outbreaks of rapture, aims at and creates a herd-illusion. But two sane and normal young men who have known one another for years, and of whom I at least am quick to detect and resist hypnotism or suggestion, talking over past memories and current happenings in a lodging-house, without any sort of emotionalism, represent about as strong a contrast to a revival as can well be imagined. We have done the same thing hundreds of times before and dozens of times since ; and I cannot detect the slightest difference to mark out this particular occasion except that on it a third was with us. I was pleased to see my friend, relieved to find him in better health than I had expected, glad to hear of his work, sorry for

his lack of comfort, delighted to give and receive news of people and things; but, save in this one respect, it was all absolutely commonplace. I know that imagination plays strange tricks with us, that 'nerves' are capable of explaining away very much that passes for experience, that it is easy to dismiss the whole matter on *a priori* grounds as an hallucination. But, for the life of me, I cannot discover any reasons at all for rejecting it except the convenient verdict of 'temporary insanity'; and if I was abnormal then, I can find no criterion by which to discriminate between reality and delusion. I have never tested any event or observation so scrupulously as this, and to me it is as well authenticated as anything else in my life.

It was only at the close of my visit that suddenly this experience of Jesus linked itself up with my theological studies. I had always kept an open mind as to the method of what is commonly called the resurrection, and am not prepared either then or now to go to the stake for belief in the empty tomb. The accounts of the first Easter are not free from unhistorical additions: they are confused and difficult to estimate exactly. But the conviction that Jesus did not then cease to be, that He survived and was in whatever form manifested to His followers seemed to me not only well attested, but necessary to explain the origin and course of the Christian movement. Whether in modern days a scientific observer would describe His 'appearances' as the New Testament describes them; to what extent the author of the Acts, who certainly had a Greek's habit of vivid

and dramatic visualising, uses concrete and objective terms which we should not adopt for such experiences; how far psychology can account for the peculiar elements in St. Paul's conversion, coming as it did after a time of repressed emotion and violent effort to vindicate his own attitude: such questions I was not prepared to ignore or answer glibly. But both on particular and on general grounds I had satisfied myself of the probability of the risen life of Jesus. Now I saw that if indeed He had survived, as the earliest disciples and a multitude of others through the centuries had testified, then the corollary that He is alive and with us was natural, if not inevitable. Having seen it, I felt a fool for not having understood it before. The thing was simple enough, even if its effects were revolutionary: only, until experience convinced me, I had neither expected nor believed it.

There have been two great episodes in my life spent in trains: the first was when I travelled back from my lady's home in Norfolk and knew that she loved me; the second was the journey that evening from Stoke to Liverpool. And the peculiar quality of them both was the same. It was a glory of wonder and worship, an overwhelming surprise that to me, to me of all people in the world, this comradeship of love had been given; an awe, free from all fear and all desire, utterly happy in the certainty of the gift; a rapture in which there was neither past nor future, a rapture full of the song of the morning stars.

Jesus and my lady, does it seem incongruous to unite them so? Not at least to me: for indeed

the identity of their influence is not of my making. Or does it suggest that in each case my feeling was erotic and sexual? Again I think not. A young man's first love has no conscious sexuality in its early ecstasy; sex comes later, supplying the true sacrament by which love can be expressed and consummated. And religion, the worship of Jesus, may sometimes be sexually coloured. I have pondered it as carefully as I can in my own case, and have never found it so. Certainly that night, those nights, the experience was far too full and whole to be so classified. This was the satisfaction of every fibre of my being, the communion of person with person, friendship at its zenith; my life was linked with another life. There are times when analysis, however acute, fails to represent more than a fraction of the truth, and where to stress one element is to upset the poise and completeness of the whole. To interpret such an experience in terms of certain instincts is as futile as to explain a living man as just carbonates and phosphates and proteins and water. This at least is sure that if anything that I have felt or known is real, these two gifts of love are real. The first rapture has passed, though in each case it has been renewed and even transcended: but the certainty then established has never faded nor changed. I have seen death face to face three times: everything else has gone from me: Jesus and my wife, these two have remained unshaken. I have failed them: they have never failed me.

Sugars and adrenalin; suggestion or compensation; projection and visualising; hysteria, imagination, moonshine; it has been my business

to examine pretty closely the theories of those who would explain my contact with Jesus in one or other of these ways. They are ingenious folk—some of them—and their studies are often most illuminating. Nor do I doubt that there is a modicum of truth in most of them, even the most materialistic. But when these mechanisms are put forward as serious and complete explanations of mine or any other intense human experience, I wonder first whether their authors are really convinced by their theorising, and then whether they are people who have ever really lived, who know anything at first-hand of the agonies and ecstasies of mankind. Not infrequently my suspicions have been confirmed, though even then such people are less inhuman than their doctrines. Materialists, as my own past warns me, usually behave in a fashion wholly inconsistent with materialism: the practical materialist is generally a person who has never thought at all, and who therefore in a Christian country probably supposes himself to be a churchman.

Yet, though I do not believe that any mechanistic hypothesis fits my case, I would urge that those whose religion rests upon similar experiences should recognise the importance of testing their faith and the right of others to challenge its validity. Reason must rule, or we are plunged into a bedlam of superstition. It is indeed a powerful deterrent to confession for those of us who value our good sense that if we refer to any sort of mysticism or personal contact with Jesus we at once let loose a flood of puerile ghost-stories and unbalanced imaginings. Here, as in the case

of all evidence for religion, the matter must be drastically scrutinised : it is of immense importance, and mistakes are easy and excusable.

Certainly for myself, though the episode at Stoke carried conviction and has been since abundantly corroborated, I can only submit it to the judgment of others with the plea that I have tried to deal honestly with it. I should not dream of urging that the Christian religion stands or falls by the objectivity of such an experience ; very many, far better Christians than I, will interpret their knowledge of Jesus in wholly different fashion. Whether they recognise Him, as I am constrained to do, as personally and objectively present, or acclaim Him in the influence of His life and teaching upon themselves and their fellows, may well be a matter of temperament. Even those who think me deluded will hardly wish to exclude me from Christian fellowship ; and those who share my opinion will agree that they must not confine God's revelation to its embodiment in Jesus, but see and acknowledge it in all that is Christlike. Indeed, knowing as I do the danger of thus isolating Jesus and worshipping Him as a thing apart from His brethren, and realising full well how hard many an honest seeker feels it to accept my belief, I would gladly, if I could honestly, assent to the contention that my experience is just visualising or externalising. After all I may well be mistaken : what is or appears true to me, may be in fact and on a fuller understanding an error. I may be at a level of development which cannot escape from the personifying of its ideals : there may be in me a streak of the primitive or a

tendency to revert to outworn habits of mind. Naturally, perhaps, such a verdict does not satisfy me. I can only take my experience of life as a whole, and contest that Jesus is an essential part in it. But if this belief is an obstacle to others, let them write me down a fanatic. It is our imitation of Jesus that matters, not the mode of our communion with Him.

Yet for those who find Him as He has come to me, the splendour of the discovery can hardly be overestimated. To have known God vaguely but very really in nature and humanity, and then to discover Him translated into a human comrade, is to find awe quickened into devotion, and reverence into love. The Eternal may stir me in certain moods and certain elements of my being: only love of person for person can possess me entire. Art, reason, virtue, these appeal to particular functions: a friend, a lover, affects every fibre as my whole self goes out freely in response. If it be true that it is through relationship with others that we achieve personality, and that the quality of our friends determines our own, then the comradeship of Jesus should lift and integrate our nature as nothing else could do. And if in love we become what we love, and if Jesus be for us God, then indeed to love Him is to become in some sort divine. To me this holds promise of development for us to the fulness of the measure of His and our stature.

There is, I suppose, a stage in the life of each one of us, as there is too in the course of the evolution of living organisms, in which we behave by rule and rote, when behaviour is not inaptly

interpreted by mechanical analogies. We live in an orderly universe, and we have to learn in obedience to law. 'The law,' as St. Paul remarked, 'is our schoolmaster.' But it is a phase which human beings ought to outgrow; for if they persist in it they become creatures of routine, mere machines, capable of doing certain definite tasks with precision and efficiency, but only at the cost of the atrophy of their vital processes, by loss of elasticity and freedom of adjustment. They become slaves of habit and convention and etiquette, of forms and formulæ. The plastic sensitiveness, the native versatility, the creative liberty of life are lost. And with it go romance and adventure and freshness, all that Christ meant by friendship and sonship, all that St. Paul meant by grace and liberty and faith.

Those who follow Jesus and find in Him an eternal relationship with reality are free to live with a zest that never wearies and a spontaneity that is never mechanical. Every day is a revelation of new aspects of His love. They are perpetually discovering in nature, in humanity, in the events of time and space fresh sacraments of His presence. They confront the world with the wonder and creativeness of a child, and they solve its problems and surmount its trials, not by obeying the appropriate regulation, but with the immediate and inevitable naturalness of one who in the light of his love can do no other. Such men are masters of their fate, captains of their souls, free and full-grown: for they are the servants of reality, living eternally. I had found the evidence of such men in the letters of St. Paul, in certain

of the documents of the Early Church, in the inscriptions of the Catacombs, in the records of the martyrs. Here in the love of the living Jesus was the secret of the gaiety, the fortitude, the power of His disciples. 'Blessed are the meek,' said Jesus, 'for they shall inherit the earth,' and 'Whoso loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.' 'All things are yours,' said His apostle, 'for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's.' And on that bank-holiday evening, travelling back among the tired crowds of happy folk, I first learned that the words were not a dream. This was life, and life abounding.

The immediate result was of course the clarifying of my plans for the future. If Christianity meant not church services and orthodox beliefs and all the minutiæ of institutional religion but this radiant love and joy and peace and long-suffering, then Christianity was what the world needed. As a philosophy I was already convinced of its value: but one cannot enthuse over dogmas. Here was a 'way' for which enthusiasm could not be withheld, a way which mankind would surely be glad to follow. Here was an experience which went deeper than all the reforms and policies and programmes, an experience in which the whole world was made new. For me henceforward there could be no uncertainty: somehow or other I must serve Jesus, finding the sphere of work in which service could be most direct and continuous. My club-boys had aroused in me the desire for a ministry in which I could give my whole time to their company. Hitherto I had known that I really had nothing to give, and had

suspected that instruction in gymnastics or even social and educational work was not enough. What must be done was not merely to influence the development of a handful of waifs, but so to change the outlook and ordering of society that everyone should use his talents for the common good; not merely to offer palliatives in the way of food, housing, health or wages, but to transform characters as well as circumstances. What was needed was not just service of others, but religion; religion alone could effect the reforms required; religion alone was the true end of man. Now I had a religion, had something to offer. I must offer it, or be false to my Lord.

I had been brought up in the Church of England, and at that time knew nothing of other denominations; but if I had known them, my choice would have been the same. For Anglicanism, in spite of the difficulties of its establishment, is in fact both more tolerant and in most respects more free than any of the Free Churches. Doctrinally, though I was by no means orthodox and had no liking for credal tests, it was plain that the Thirty-nine Articles were rather the trust deeds of an historic institution than a code of propositions to each of which assent must be given. It was admittedly legitimate to interpret them in the light of present practice and belief; necessarily the society safe-guarded by them permitted a free departure from their exact language; for that society existed not to maintain an inerrant code of formularies, but to minister life in God. The church is an organism, and as such must be free to grow, to adjust itself to its environment, to

experiment, and to adapt its structure to the service of its end. If the responsible authorities accepted me with full knowledge of my position, I should be justified in joining it—though I confess that my dislike to the whole business of assent is very strong, and that I have never felt entirely happy about it. Aesthetically the coldness of nearly all Nonconformist chapels, and the lack of beauty in their services would at that time have sufficed to prejudice me against their ministries. Worship is essentially an art; and if Anglican churches are sadly handicapped by the abominations in stained glass and bastard Gothic perpetrated by the Victorians, at least the desire for music and colour and ritual is acknowledged. Practically, too, the individualism of Nonconformity and its political association with Liberalism, then much more definite than they are to-day, did not attract. To pass from Conservatism to Socialism was easy; I had swung from one to the other several times at Cambridge; but, mainly no doubt from prejudice, the cult of independence, of individual liberty rather than collective responsibility, of Protestantism as against Catholicism instinctively repelled me. In fact it hardly occurred to me that there were other possibilities when I resolved to give up my post in the Education Office and apply for ordination and a curacy. The whole-time service of religion could mean nothing else.

There was, however, no immediate hurry. I could not terminate my appointment at once, and had two pieces of work to finish off, my investigation of Mendelism in insects which was important

for my religious outlook, and my thesis on Apollinarianism for a fellowship. The summer should be devoted to them, and in the autumn the prospects of a return to Cambridge would be decided, and if they were closed other steps could be taken.

That summer was a time of almost perfect happiness. After the years of doubt this new conviction brought an overwhelming joy. I had never realised how deeply the previous uncertainty had affected my life until it was removed. Hitherto beneath the happiness of the moment was always a want, an emptiness: there was no foundation or underlying security. Now the experience of the reality of Jesus fixed the basis of my life's structure. All the loose material, the little bits of aspiration and belief, the stray ideas about nature and God, could be shaped into a definite whole. One by one they fell into place, now that the plan had been discovered. For Jesus became more than a friend and master: He was the explanation of the secret meaning of life, the translation into human terms of a mystery dimly apprehended in the vast movement of the universe and the vague impulses of the soul. Those months saw the beginning of the 'transvaluation of values,' of bringing order out of chaos, of reducing thought and action to a unified and harmonious pattern. Always there were facts old and new to be brought to the test of Jesus; usually there was a long effort to understand their bearing upon one another; often the result was indecisive, and a reconciliation had to be postponed; sometimes there was the delight of discovering that Jesus explained and

was explained by them. Life under such conditions is a fascinating adventure : on the one hand the quality of Jesus, imperfectly understood, but definitely acknowledged, and on the other all the complexity of things known and conjectured which, if He were the Truth, must be related to and illuminated by Him. It is easy enough to see that if the conviction of His living presence is valid, then it is not only of supreme importance and must alter the whole standpoint from which we survey the universe, but also challenges all our conventional standards of worth and compels a revision of our former ideas and actions. The task of the newly converted is first to test the reality of the experience through which he has passed and then to rearrange his philosophy and reshape his conduct on a Christ-centred pattern.

Week by week, in the ordinary situations of my daily round, I made trial of Jesus—in the office and the club, in the schools and in my rooms, in the woods and on the cricket-field, alone and in company. There were many times when I forgot and many when I failed ; there was very much in Him and in the world that perplexed me, much that I could not understand ; much, too, in my life that would have to be given up, still more that would have to be acquired : sometimes it seemed almost hopeless. Yet the joy of that season vastly outweighed its difficulty : issues that had always baffled me were now simple ; always some discovery of His adequacy would cheer me to further ventures ; gradually the belief that He was the key to a right explanation and use of life, reinforced by repeated assurances from every field of

activity, became first a working hypothesis, and then a probability so secure as to be humanly speaking a certainty. In point of fact a good deal of the intellectual side of the test had been already carried out; for my study of theology had shattered the easy and rather superficial rationalism of anti-Christian literature and had covered the general ground of critical and historical research. It was on the larger problems of the relation of Jesus to nature and to conduct that I had still to adjust my old ideas to my new faith. Such a task is never complete; but whereas at the start one is surprised to find that the new illuminates the old, after a time one expects that it will do so. And then it is no longer possible to withhold the confession that this Jesus is for us Lord and God.

Here again such language may seem painfully conventional, and open to the inference that having surrendered to a fantasy I strengthened its hold upon me by a process of auto-suggestion. In fact this is to misconceive the whole situation. What happened in my 'testing' of Jesus, was exactly what happens in any human friendship, what had happened for example in the early part of my engagement.

In the first ecstasy of love given and returned there is no room for criticism. Wonder and joy so possess one's whole being that one has neither time nor desire for analysis of motives or any enquiry into the rational aspect of the new relationship. After a while the mind awakens: questions, often very disconcerting questions, arise. Was it only glamour? Have I been swept off my feet by a wave of emotion? Is this a real 'possession

for ever'? What are my reactions to it? A young man in love will have to face these doubts of his own affection, and discover whether it is genuine and satisfying and permanent. He has to explore the depth of his own conviction. In doing so a second bunch of questions present themselves. What of the object of my love? Is this flawless perfection really complete? Are there not defects, and if so are they such as to spoil any lasting partnership? Looked at by day and in a colder mood is it a case of 'colours seen by candle-light'? The inquisition will not be made in any self-conscious or self-righteous spirit, but it cannot be shirked. Reason must approve, if there is to be a true union of personalities.

The trouble about many marriages is that a short engagement allows no time for the probing of these issues; the inevitable doubts arise too late, are repressed as disloyal, and poison the lives of both parties. Certainly for me, and I know for many others, the early months as a fiancé were a time of adjustment and anxiety, rising to a crisis in the ninth, and only being allayed as the doubts were honestly faced and the answers to them honestly given. It was exactly the same in my relationship with Jesus. After I had examined my own sanity and discovered that my first impression was, so far as I could judge, real and true, I had to investigate His character and power to satisfy me. There was no taking Him on trust; no conviction that He spoke infallibly or was in that sense divine. I went to Him as to any other friend, assuming that He was human, and scrutinising both the records of His history and my experience

of His quality. Such enquiry is partly deliberate and intellectual; one tries to analyse and estimate: partly it is accomplished by the test of living together. Something fresh happens: how does this affect my knowledge of Him? Here is a problem: what is His response to it? He is reputed to have said and done this, that and the other: do His words and deeds carry my assent? How was it that He behaved so? Why did He speak in such a fashion? If I do not yet fully understand, is the fault in Him or in me? Can I be content sincerely to leave the matter unexplained? Is it important or trivial to our relationship?

In all friendship there is much that one accepts as at present unknown, much that at first sight seems out of keeping. Unsuspected elements that jar with one's idea of one's friend creep into the picture of him. They threaten to deface it, and if so must be taken seriously: when studied they may be seen to enrich the harmony of the whole, or they may involve revaluation of it or even its rejection. In any living relationship there is nothing final or static: knowledge grows, and appreciation changes. So it is with Jesus. I have tried to be frank with difficulties, to admit and explore criticisms, to hold my loyalty to Him subject to the approval of my reason, to recognise that there is much which many find difficult, and that my understanding of what seem to them defects may be mistaken. But if to say so suggests that I have not been satisfied or that my belief in Him is frail and my confession equivocal, I can only state roundly that He has grown in

stature for me through the years, that He fulfils and transcends all that I can conceive of deity, and that, tested a myriad times, He has never failed to satisfy or to reveal under the test a richer perfection. If that summer brought the process to a state at which I could not withhold homage, my life since then has only reinforced my desire to worship.

They were very wonderful, those evenings in June when I dashed out of the office to the ferry and so by slow degrees to Delamere Forest, the curious place where so many of our moths have produced melanic varieties; sugared my round of trees, gathered my specimens, and slept a few hours; caught the milk train into Chester, shaved and breakfasted, and reappeared in the office with my pockets full of pill-boxes and my soul bathed in the peace of God. Wonderful, too, the fortnight in July when my mother and my fiancée took rooms at Parkgate, the fishing village where all my boyhood's holidays had been spent; and I bought a season-ticket and travelled to and fro with a thousand other city clerks, getting a long stroll through the fields or along the river with the two whom I loved best and that third who had so lately become mine. Most wonderful, when on a sudden came the news that my name had been submitted to the Governing Body for the vacant post of Dean of Emmanuel College, and the prospect of a speedy settlement of all my worries, an incredible fulfilment of my wildest dreams opened up before me. I could not believe that the post could come my way, and was hardly disappointed when the election was postponed till

October. But at least with it as well as the fellowship at Caius, the likelihood of ordination, marriage and work at Cambridge was no longer remote. It seemed as if everything was falling out with an almost magic perfection.

And so indeed it did—though if I had known what was to be the sequel I should have perhaps been less gloriously happy. In October my election went through immediately, the only other candidate having been appointed at his own college. I had warned the Director of Education, and he raised no objection to my departure. There were two months in which to clear up affairs in Liverpool and prepare for the Bishop's examination, months even more rich in humour than my year of secret engagement. When the ugly duckling moulted and became a swan, the change in the attitude of his neighbours must have given him a deal of amusement. Lots of people had been kind to me in Liverpool, others had not: nothing had prepared me for the universal popularity of which hitherto I had been blissfully unconscious. It was well for me when my moth-collecting friend of the Colosseum, the only person whom I really hated leaving, met my sentimentalities with the caustic remark 'You aren't the only pebble on the beach.' He knew just how small the boy dean really was—and felt.

After such a year ordination came as a fitting climax. There was, I think, a faint revival of morbid fear—natural enough for anyone at such a time, and especially so for me whose experience of institutional religion and fitness for a parson's calling were so slight. Those tremendous pledges

over which I had worked as honestly as I could in the previous months, now when I had to take them seemed far beyond what I dare undertake. The points that are usually supposed to trouble ordinands did not worry me so much : my clerical friends had accepted the Articles and stated that they unfeignedly believed all the canonical Scriptures, and yet all of them thought as I did about predestination and inspiration : and when one has spent much time over historical documents one cannot but see that the sense in which they are taken constantly changes, indeed that such change is essential to the life of the church. It was the moral and spiritual demand that terrified me. I had never been a very regular or enthusiastic churchgoer : the recital of offices was a bore, and, though then I should not have said so, surely a bit of superstitious legalism : pious people still irritated me : my life had been thoroughly lay, full of secular interests and odd friendships. How could I ever hope to ' draw all my cares and studies this way,' when I had a passion for birds and was a keen collector of moths ? Must there not be a great renunciation ? Ought I not at least to lay down rules of discipline, and resume the business of self-examination, and make lists of things for which to pray ? It was bad enough to know that one was utterly unworthy of the vocation ; but everyone was unworthy. It was worse to be so unfitted for it, so ill-equipped, so unspecialised. Only three things I knew, and of them in the dark hours I laid hold. Jesus had called me : without that I could not have come. I had made up my mind that it was my duty to seek orders ; if the

resolution had not been taken before there was any question of my appointment as dean, I should have had to decline it. The post was not of my seeking; others had sent up my name: I could not shirk it without being false to conscience, and my friends, and my Lord. He held me. That was all that mattered. As soon as I got close to Him all the worries were forgotten. Joy came in the morning, and the service was full of the quietness of His presence. We were in the heavenlies.

It was in a sort of ecstasy that I went home next day, conscious only of the wonder of God, wrapped in an unearthly happiness. Gradually as the journey proceeded I was aware of sidelong glances and an atmosphere of restraint in the carriage. It was obvious enough to make me self-conscious, me who had rubbed along in comradeship with my fellows for years. What was the matter? Was my tie crooked or my nose smeared with dirt? Illumination burst upon me, and I descended to earth with a crash. It was the collar. I was a parson. The caste-mark set all these jolly laymen sniffing!

Tragedy and comedy are strangely mingled for the parson in this first discovery of his isolation. He is less avoided now; the war did something to break down the respect or contempt for the cloth; and in any case one gets acclimatised to an atmosphere of aloofness and unreality. But in the early days the misery of it hurts horribly. Once in an unforgivable moment of irritation with the apathy of a fashionable London congregation I startled them out of their coma by saying that

what was wrong with the church was that the laity treated their clergy either as plaster saints or as blasted fools; and the remark though wrongly phrased was true. Jesus did not have this effect: people heard him gladly, and either followed or persecuted. With us it is a conventional reverence or an ill-concealed dislike, best behaviour or apologies and attempts to shock, not the natural comradeship of man with man.

But it has also its comic side, and it is well that we can see it. Otherwise, after the scorn of the worldly, the flattery of the devout would be our undoing. I was forcibly enlightened upon the danger in my first summer vacation. The rector of the seaside parish very generously asked me to preach. Two days later he called with a letter and, I fancy, the suspicion of a twinkle in his eye. The letter was very feminine, a gushing eulogy of my discourse and a request that it should be printed. Fortunately I was not deceived; the sermon was obviously not worth further circulation. 'Yes,' said the rector, 'I'm very glad she liked it, and I saw her in church; but she is as deaf as a post and can't have heard a word.' If the laity find their parsons insincere, they have only too often themselves to blame.

At first, I confess, the taste of that hot-house air was almost nauseating, and often made me wonder whether the joy of my work at Cambridge and the opportunity of speaking openly about God were not too dearly bought. It is an evil thing that a cleric can only be received as a friend by his fellows after long weeks of constraint and suspicion—and then often because he is 'not a bit

like a parson.' No wonder our younger men run to soft collars and coloured ties, and strange oaths in the pulpit: they find themselves in a cage and must fling their bodies against its bars. The layman's aloofness is no doubt in part a tribute to the cloth (I wish it could be paid in other coin !), in part a fear that we shall preach or proselytise, and in part the strange distrust of the professional which is characteristic of the Englishman. There is always a certain dislike of the expert; but in religion it has sunk deeper than in any other field, and its effects are both more universal and more destructive.

People have asked me why I 'went into the church,' and why I stay in it. This book may perhaps answer them. Yet there have been times when loyalty has been strained, and strained not for reasons of doctrine or from dissatisfaction with the work, but from the desire to escape from ostracism, live again as a man among men, and get my convictions discussed on their merits. It is this last that weighs most heavily. People will read me when I write about birds; I could lecture six days a week if their haunts and habits were my theme; on that subject folks accept me, perhaps because I am only an amateur. Yet I know far more about religion than ornithology, care about it much more deeply, speak and write about it with greater ease and interest. And on religion the public prefers to turn to the popular novelist, who is ready to give his views about Christianity with a naïve ignorance that he would be ashamed to display if he were treating of history or psychology. No one would go to Mr. Wells or Mr.

Arnold Bennett if he was in need of a doctor, or to Mr. Compton Mackenzie if he wanted to build a house; and in all honesty it must be admitted that these gentlemen can hardly know less about medicine or architecture than they do about theology and religion. There are a multitude of books published every year by men and women who write wisely and vividly about God and have both experienced and studied the realities of Christianity; if they are of the laity, they may secure readers; one or two, even if parsons, have convinced the public that they are unecclesiastical. Most of us clergy spend our lives talking to the converted—and shocking them; and ordinary folks, just like ourselves, set us down as dishonest or prejudiced or 'out of touch with life.' By all means let the amateur speak his mind: a hierarchy is rightly distrusted; only here as elsewhere there should be some regard paid to the more accurate knowledge of the life-long student.

There is a change coming. The distrust is less than of old. It is far better for us to work within the institution which in other respects we love, and to promote as we can the disappearance of taboos. But when you have an entirely lay mind, plenty of lay friends, first-hand experience of sundry lay callings, and a very lay family, it is rather cruel to find yourself cut off from comradeship or supposed to be interested in the subject nearest to your heart for motives of professional piety or of secular advancement. 'Of course you're keen about bucking up the church for subconscious motives: you get your money from it,' says the

candid youngster who has dabbled in psycho-analysis. 'Dear old church, our best insurance agency against industrial trouble—so long as these ruddy bishops don't go playing with Socialism' explodes the equally candid millionaire, forgetting his discretion for a moment. 'Dope: God is just part of the ideology of Capitalism: Jesus was one of us, if He ever lived at all' says the Marxist, and adds 'you'll still be bleating about brotherhood when we're dying on the barricades—unless you're blessing the guns.' The cleavage between the church and the street has sunk deep.

Yet can one whose story is bound up with that cleavage be better employed than in trying to repair it? At present religion is identified with churchmanship in the minds of men, and if they reject the latter they usually reject the former with it. Some would have us forswear the ancient institutions and seek for God outside them—which means that our search will start with an anti-Christian bias and deprived of the genuine treasures of experience and devotion which organised Christianity still possesses. For me at one time, and for very many still, that is the only honest course. Indeed I agree with them that some day we may outgrow institutionalism; is it not written of the City of God that there is no temple there? But that day, if it ever comes, is not yet. A church of some sort is indispensable, and it is easier and wiser and more charitable to reform that which exists than to devise a new one, as any candid student of the 'fancy religions' of to-day will admit. Certainly for those who share my faith there is no life like that of a parson; none

in which we should be so free to concern ourselves with God, and to bring our work and our interests into harmony; none that offers such contacts with all sorts and conditions of men or, when distrust is overcome, so generous a welcome and so fascinating a service; none in which variety of method and unity of end are so combined. Hampered as we may be by the traditions of the past, unworthy as we must be of so high a calling, we are at least serving in our measure nothing lower than man's highest ideal, the establishment upon earth of that which Jesus called the Kingdom of Heaven. And it is probably our own fault that we are so often set down as fools or knaves.

IV. A START IN LIFE

'Allons! through struggles and wars!'

Two days after the announcement of my appointment as 'Dean at twenty-four' I received an ingenious missive from an address in East London. It commended a moustache-grower, and guaranteed that the use of one bottle would add ten years to my age. That had warned me (for I smelt a forgery in it) of the difficulties that might await me. Twelve months before I had been a fairly well-known and by no means devout bachelor of arts, a friend of Flecker and Rupert Brooke and of the Sunday Games Club and other very unecclesiastical circles. Now I was a parson and a don, responsible for the religion and morals of men who had been at school with me. I fully expected to be unmercifully ragged. At Caius I most certainly should have been.

Emmanuel was curiously different. It was a Protestant foundation, and the influence clung to it still. They were a fine lot of men, but for the most part quiet and steady-going, with a large number of parsons' sons and ordinands among them. To me they were extraordinarily kind—indeed in the whole of my time I only had trouble

with two of them, and that not for long. Taken all round they were as good a type as you could get anywhere, and though the college was inclined to favour a system of spoon-feeding, this at least fostered close touch between seniors and juniors, and the relationship was generally very happy. No man could have had a pleasanter sphere of work or larger opportunities. I was responsible for directing the studies of those who were reading theology, and for a heavy programme of lecturing on the Gospels, Early Church History, Doctrine and Patristics.

The first week of my new duties was nevertheless an ordeal. I had only spoken in public on very rare occasions, and never before a critical audience. Now I had to embark on two courses of lectures, without having had time to prepare either of them adequately, and to preach the first sermon of the term and of my life. I had had no training at all in the technique of speaking, and was hideously nervous. One never realises how long an hour can be until one has to fill it with discourse. Shyness means condensation: facts get stated, but in the style of a quick-firing gun, without pauses or any concern as to whether they hit or miss the attention of the listeners. I went in armed with material which I hoped would be sufficient; in fact I had only prepared three lectures altogether. The first, which should have lasted an hour, took just over fifteen minutes; and it was only because I got less flurried as I went on that the three sufficed until the clock struck. At this rate I should cover my whole subject in the first fortnight of the term.

However I had not actually broken down, and words came pretty easily; and at the second lecture time went more rapidly. It did not take long to discover how much could be done; indeed after a little practice the adaptation of the material to the period became almost automatic.

This unconscious appreciation of the passage of time is a great advantage to a speaker, though I am very uncertain whether it can be cultivated or what is its psychological explanation. Not only is it easy to speak to an exact limit without using a watch, but given a subject and the number of minutes available, one's mind naturally adjusts itself to the right 'gearing' and shapes the development of the theme proportionately. Whether it be the sermon at morning chapel at Harvard—a rather hectic four to six minutes according to the length of hymn or anthem—or the Three Hours on a Good Friday, I shall have finished without hurry or worry as the clock strikes its first note. It may be that much practice in examination papers, where the object of the examinee is to finish the questions and to give to each its full share of space, is responsible. Or the habit may arise from the faculty by which one can wake up at a given moment—a faculty which, if one does not distrust it, works unerringly. I suspect that there is a real subconscious time-sense; but that the ability to frame a speech in proportion to the time allowed is largely a matter of experience—though in my own case it is done without conscious effort. Will some expert psychologist kindly enlighten me on the subject?

As regards lecturing, I had resolved from

the first that the method which consists in reading out a manuscript for dictation was wholly mistaken. Discourses of this sort might just as well be put into print and distributed to the class. I had suffered from the dictated lecture as an undergraduate and can testify that for the vast majority of students it is sheer waste of time. One sits and scribbles furiously without digesting what is being said; the result is often illegible, and the real work has to be done afterwards in reading up one's notes. The lecturer's business is not to supply a substitute for a text-book, but to arouse interest, to convey a personal interpretation of the facts, and to make his hearers think for themselves. Let him by all means encourage his class to take down a summary and notes of particular points, but let him ruthlessly suppress the desire to obtain a transcript of his every utterance. 'You see, sir,' said a young man to me when I was reproving him for cutting one of his lecturers, 'there are several copies of his lecture-notes in the College, I've got one, and we only go in order to laugh a sentence ahead of his jokes.' Of course if one is going to talk and teach instead of reading a document, it takes both fuller knowledge and more vitality: it is much harder work. But of its value both for lecturer and class there can be no question. In the old days when books were few dictation may have been justified; nowadays both in theory and in practice it is hard to defend.

But can a man, every man, learn to speak without a manuscript? My first sermon set me wondering. I knew that I must either read it from

first to last, keeping my eyes rivetted to the paper, or must abandon my script altogether. For if once I stray into impromptu utterance I can never get back to the written word, and to do so is to break contact with the audience. I had spoken just enough to be afraid that a total breakdown was possible, that my mind might become a complete blank, or that I might go rambling on without coherence or grip. The prospect filled me with such terror that for hours beforehand I could not swallow solid food, and while speaking my whole body was shivering. That first sermon took many hours of preparation; it was written out word for word, then read over and over again, and then rehearsed. Time after time with a watch beside me and a desk to represent the pulpit, I would go over the whole performance from invocation to ascription, locking myself into my room and speaking aloud as if to a congregation. For the first three or four years of my ministry that was my method; fortunately I did not have more than a dozen sermons a year; each of them was an agony. Then early in 1915 I was put in charge of a parish where I had to preach five times every Sunday to an overlapping congregation—five separate discourses. To learn them all was impossible: to prepare them all was difficult: I must improvise. The years of labour had not been in vain. I have only written half a dozen sermons since, and for many years have hardly ever used a note. But when people say, as one of my Surrey parishioners did, 'Oh, you've got the gift of the gab,' I look back on the misery, the sickening terror, of those early preachments, and

wonder if all gifts are so hardly earned. And when my colleagues complain that they cannot preach without a manuscript, I wonder if they have made the effort to learn. To many people, I know, extempore utterance comes easy: they are the folks who might be well advised to write, lest talking fluently they also talk nonsense. But I had no experience and little facility; if I have obtained any freedom it has been bought at a great price.

That the result is worth it, seems to me plain. For the preacher, like the teacher, is an interpreter; and he cannot interpret adequately unless he can follow the movements of the minds of his audience and keep in touch with them. His whole self must be free for this contact; he must be sensitive not only to what he sees or hears but to the far more intimate impact of their personalities upon his. It is of course evident to any experienced speaker not only whether his hearers are attentive, but to what extent they are united and in agreement with him, where he has been obscure and how he can explain a misunderstanding. I once gave a course of voluntary lectures to a class of some forty people which included a professor, a Newnham don, two Sisters of Mercy, several ladies more or less interested, several teachers in secondary, elementary, and Sunday Schools, and a bunch of undergraduates and graduates at all levels of knowledge and ignorance. 'You were dancing about like a cat on hot bricks,' said one of them afterwards; and the reason for my restlessness was obvious: there was no common mind in the audience, no

common measure of understanding; if I talked to one the others were bored or bewildered. My uncertainty expressed itself in my feet.

It is as the actual technique of speaking becomes second nature, as one ceases to bother about words or grammar or the pace of the delivery or the pitch of the voice, that the real sympathy between speaker and hearers becomes possible. Personally, I am almost entirely unaware of what my body is doing, unless I have been warned of some trick of gesture and am on guard against it: nor can I remember afterwards the exact phrases or even, sometimes, the sequence of thought. Preaching is in fact no more artificial than talking to a friend: it is talking about God, and whether in a cathedral or over a fire, if the atmosphere is friendly, all is natural and easy. Of course a large audience is more inspiring than a small one: but it is the degree of fellowship, the unity of desire, far more than the numbers, that matter. If there is real keenness and a real group mind, preaching can rise to the level of the purest corporate worship. Preacher and congregation are free from self-consciousness and critical detachment; they are together aware of God and of one another as in Him, and what is said is not the product of one man's brain but the expression of that of which all are aware, that to which all are aspiring. There are times of this kind when anyone describing them in the language of a Greek of the first century would say that 'the place was shaken.'

My attitude towards lectures and sermons was governed by the belief that the old type of set and

formal speech was no longer appropriate. In the days when printing was comparatively rare and many people hardly read anything, the delivery of written discourses was an important means of education. Now any sermon or lecture which has to be written down, any speech which aims primarily at instruction and deals with a closely reasoned argument is perhaps better circulated in type, so that it can be studied carefully and as a whole. The speaker of to-day, as opposed to the publicist, will aim at talking simply and intimately about his theme, with the object of stimulating ideas rather than supplying knowledge. The newspapers, the pamphlet, the wireless are the proper media for impersonal statements. Preaching used to occupy the place which they have now largely taken, and the preacher is thus freed to concentrate upon the prophetic side of his work. He can here do what the printed word can never do; and he should, I think, confine himself to this and develop a technique quite different from that of the writer. In any case it is very noticeable that whereas fifty years ago the distinction in style between written and spoken words was not very large, to-day there are few effective speeches which read well, and still fewer written speeches which hold an audience. Hence, looking back to the classic orators, men complain that the art of oratory has been lost.

There are, of course, occasions on which the dignity or size of the assembly forces us to the older technique: we must 'declaim' as best we can. But this is a change from our usual method. In general the preacher aims at creating a sense

of informality and comradeship, at enlisting interest in the discovery of truth rather than attention while he announces it. The result is no doubt often deplorable; the 'pull' of an audience is so powerful as to sweep him off his balance if he is not sure of his message. It is easy to mistake pandering to the passions of a crowd for prophesying to a company of worshippers. The story of democracy is full of illustrations of such a danger. The preacher is not to be a demagogue except in the high and literal sense of the word: his concern is with God not with the wishes of the congregation. But because God is love, he will not express Him worthily unless he is sympathetic with and responsive to his hearers. The world will not outgrow the need for the contact of personality with personality, or for the corporate worship in which the minister voices the aspirations of the faithful and proclaims with them the good news of God. It is fast outgrowing the desire to hear read what it would prefer to read for itself.

This is something of a digression; for during those first years the idea that I should ever be able to speak without misery or sense of strain as I clung desperately to memories of my theme and strove to produce it in intelligible grammar, would have seemed an idle dream. Suffice it if I could somehow stumble over the familiar course without a break-down or lapses into lameness or wanderings from the track. One thing I soon realised, that my sole hope was to forget about myself, to spend the moments before my sermons in concentration upon God and His children, laying

aside all effort to remember the points of my discourse and all fears and ambitions; when this could be done, the difficulties were enormously diminished; for self-consciousness was the enemy, and it arose from anxiety about the criticism or appreciation of my hearers. In the lecture-room I very soon found out that if I were vitally interested in the subject the class would be interested too, and none of us had any attention to spare upon ourselves. In the pulpit this was much harder, partly, I think, because there is a sense of awe which makes natural behaviour difficult, and partly for me, because the college chapel contained the most awkward audience in the world, seniors curious to see how their new and very junior colleague would acquit himself, and undergraduates present under compulsion and mildly supercilious, a congregation seated with no regard to the sermon which had to be delivered from a stall in the middle of the south side and directly above the backs of the freshmen's heads.

The lectures of that first term and those that followed gave me the opportunity, hitherto lacking, of saturating myself in the Synoptic Gospels. It was my business to deliver three courses a year on one of them, and a fourth upon the general problem of their origin and relationships; and the lectures being for the Pass degree were concerned rather with the actual Greek text and its meaning than with manuscripts, commentators, or advanced criticism. No amount of reading about the Gospels could have taken the place of that daily effort to enter into and explain their language so as to interest a class easily bored by technical

minutiæ, but quick to follow up points of exegesis and fascinated by the comparison of one narrative with another. Four years of constant poring over the parallel columns of Rushbrooke's *Synopticon* failed to make me a New Testament scholar in the strict sense: it made the text of the first three Gospels part and parcel of my mind.

It is a mine from which one can never return without having quarried some new and precious possession. If at first the familiarity of the English version and the traditional pictures associated with it from childhood, make one content rather to revive the old than to explore the new, the stimulus of teaching forces one to get to grips with difficulties, to penetrate beneath the surface, and gradually to revise one's whole conception of the story, of the evangelists, and of the Christ. Most of us come to it as to an album of separate photographs: we see Jesus in a number of vivid and disconnected scenes: He is always the same, the haloed and semi-mythical figure, wrapped in an unearthly majesty of power and peace, too often a mere wax-work image of the numinous. Then as we study Him, He comes to life before our eyes. Taking St. Mark as our guide, we discover movement, method, an ordered sequence in His dealings with His opponents and His training of His disciples, a chain of cause and effect, and of interaction between Himself and His environment. We cannot set out the whole in its precise chronological order, but the main lines of the drama become plain and take on a unity of theme. If at times we are bewildered to find how various are the aspects of what had once been static and

etherial, if Jesus strikes us as almost paradoxical in His sociability and His loneliness, His energy and His restraint, His violence and His calm, His hardness and His sympathy, gradually the diverse facets of His personality take their places, and we get glimpses of the fully-developed grandeur of the perfect Son of Man. And as we do so we discover that He and His story present to us the problem of the universe itself, on a scale less intolerably immense. Here is the microcosm of which the Stoics dreamed, here the image of the invisible God, here the consummation of all human worth; in this single life is concentrated man's age-long problem, and is contained, if we can perceive it, that problem's long-awaited solution.

Those hours in the lecture-room interpreted and enriched for me my experience of Jesus, and made possible a far wider discovery of Him and communion with Him. Working again and again through the characteristic portraits of the several Evangelists I came to separate out the different elements in their books, to allow for the particularities of each, to weigh up the varying value of their evidence, and always more and more plainly to see and worship Him to whom they bore witness.

With regularity in study came also the discipline of the regular chapel services; and for me whose mind is disorderly and habits are ill-organised the benefit of early rising and the recital of offices was very great. Left to myself I can most conveniently work till the small hours of the new day, and then get up to a late and rather surly breakfast. At first the warning bell at 7.15

which represented the last possible moment in bed was an abomination; even now the memory of it is unloved. But the unfailing attendance of my colleague, the Senior Tutor, made it impossible for me to be late or absent, and the necessity was a blessing even when I cursed it. In fact it was at times a real effort; for the undergraduate does not talk freely about his soul until after 10 p.m.; a dean's work is mostly done from that hour till after midnight; and when you have been wrestling with intellectual subtleties or moral troubles, it is not easy to get to sleep till the excitement has subsided. But those quiet minutes morning and evening in the little chapel were a glorious liberation from the worries of the term, and the repetition of prayers and psalms and scriptures, though in themselves monotonous and to a casual visitor no doubt dull, gave just the right atmosphere for repose of soul. I cannot think that in a fixed liturgy we are meant to make the tedious effort of applying every familiar word afresh to our immediate needs; rather we can ride loose to much of the service, finding in its ordered variety those elements that meet our desire for specific prayer, but realising through it all, as through music or architecture, the changeless beauty and love of God.

All this was very new and at first perplexing, but its novelty was not the most serious element in the situation. We all have to go through the ordeal of our start in life, we all find it absorbing and often difficult. But in my case the position was not only strange, it was enormously complicated. And I had not been more than a few days

in residence before the main outline of the problem was made clear, and I found myself in a singularly unenviable dilemma.

Emmanuel had been traditionally Protestant and orthodox. Its Master when I was appointed was a layman, unmarried and in ill-health, a great administrator, officially something of a martinet, privately a charming host and delightful companion, obviously the strongest member of the Governing Body. He had been brought up in the old ways, had gradually been estranged from the religion of his youth, and twelve months before my coming had decided that the conventional conspiracy of silence among those who in fact repudiated orthodoxy must be broken. He seemed like a man who had caught late in life the scepticism that infects most of us at eighteen; and like measles at his age it was a bad attack. He was splendidly sincere and full of courage in his conviction that he must lead a crusade against superstition; but his criticism of Christianity was not new, he was not a great thinker or scholar, and had no very clear position of his own. I am very doubtful whether anything that he wrote went beyond what many modernists accept and approve. But he was the head of a Protestant college. He did not mince his words in denouncing the foolishness of conventional belief; and his pamphlet, 'Prove all things,' came as a thunderbolt among the faithful. Whether in his position he was morally justified in publishing it, may be argued; if so, it was perhaps unnecessary to make its phrasing so provocative; at least it set the college in a ferment. The Governing Body was rent into

parties, and the whole atmosphere was tense with suspicion and excitement.

On one side the Master's campaign found me not ill-prepared. I had till recently shared his scepticism, had spent my student-days in discussing similar issues, was not easily shocked nor unfamiliar with the arguments, and because I had met them in my own progress towards faith knew their strength and appeal at first hand. If my experience of Christianity was scanty, it was at least fresh and unconventional; and it had been built up out of exactly the state of mind to which the Master had given expression. There were times when my ignorance horrified me, when I felt utterly helpless and futile; and times when my unorthodoxy startled me, and I wondered if surrendering so much of the traditional position I had any right to call myself a Christian. But on the whole I believe that those who have themselves won through from doubt to faith are more likely to commend their religion to the sceptic than those whose only acquaintance with intellectual objections is drawn from books. The man of simple and child-like godliness will always give the infidel pause, and may often be a potent instrument in his conversion. But he cannot argue, for argument involves power to realise the strong points of the opposite side and their fascination and influence. Personally I found it easier to defend Christianity in the Religious Discussion Society than to maintain friendly relations with the young men for whom the creation of Eve out of Adam's rib or the adventures of Noah were essential articles of belief.

For the hammering out of a formulated doctrine this atmosphere of debate was extraordinarily suitable. Hitherto I had got a working knowledge of patristic theology and of certain aspects of modern science, a small but vivid experience of the reality and character of Jesus, and a fairly wide acquaintance with modern books and modern men. But a coherent scheme was far beyond me. I knew enough to have rejected old interpretations of creation, incarnation, atonement and inspiration, and had glimmerings of the form in which they could be recast. It was in the long evenings of discussion with a group of able men, whose views ranged from stoic to hedonist, and were far more critical than constructive, that vague conjectures took shape, that opinions were winnowed and sifted, and the outline of a definite system began to appear. For one, who like myself, cannot think easily alone, and whose mind works best under friction, the chaos in the college was intellectually a valuable stimulus. I was the only Christian in the society, and was consequently the usual Aunt Sally for all its members. One learnt not only how to meet a variety of objections from many angles, but how to parry one without exposing an undefended flank to another.

There was of course always the consolation of an experience of Jesus and of God which argument was not likely to shake. But for purposes of debate I was slow, probably too slow, in appealing to it. For I realised that to do so was to close discussion. If one simply states ' This I know ' or ' This I believe,' and can only give one's own conviction as a basis, the immediate reply is ' Yes,

you may know it, I don't; and if your experience is valid for you, so is mine for me.' Probably if my faith had been stronger, I should have relied much more explicitly upon personal testimony; for as the critic discovers that Jesus is to the Christian not a mere name but a living reality, he can no longer discuss Him as he would discuss Socrates or the Buddha; and if the testimony is confirmed by a life of spiritual power, the obvious objection that it is an illusion does not carry much weight. Looking back on those old days I am sure that I was far too argumentative, too reliant upon intellect, too sure that clear thinking was the supreme need. Only gradually came the discovery that men are not converted by proofs that Christianity is reasonable: argument may remove obstacles; it does not of itself create new life.

Yet in a college where Christianity was associated with simple faith and, it must be confessed, with much foolish obscurantism, I believe it was well for me to have discussed religion as a philosophy rather than have proclaimed it as a gospel. For the student's task is, after all, to use and develop his mind; and the Master was perfectly right in his complaint that in the university the Christian faith was the only subject on which our minds were closed or at least constrained to silence. If in these days the tendency to regard faith as an answer to a problem, not a way of life, has been overdone, in 1910 Christians almost avowedly decried reason and avoided speculation.

It was in its effect on my personal position that the Master's campaign made the situation almost intolerable, though fortunately for me I did not

discover the full complexity of it at once. For the first six months all that I knew was that in a college closely connected with Evangelical parsonages and containing a large number of ordinands the Master had not only expressed his hostility to orthodoxy but had published and circulated his criticisms, and that much as I sympathised with many of his views my status was that of official representative of the opposition. The general attitude of my colleagues was curiously disunited. One or two expressly agreed with the Master's opinions and approved of his actions. Others, if they agreed with him, considered that he ought not to have acted publicly. Others disliked his ideas, but hoped that now all would be well, since he had made his protest. Others deplored and resented the whole business. In fact, of the thirteen of us, no two felt alike, though all felt strongly; and consequently any common policy was impossible, except one of *laissez faire*. It was not until the summer, when the campaign of criticism was renewed and the entry of freshmen showed a heavy drop, that a letter from a headmaster asking me whether Emmanuel was a fit place for a candidate for holy orders enabled me to raise the question of the Master's policy in the Governing Body. It was the first time that he had been opposed publicly; and though it was, as I now see, highly improper for me who had only just taken my M.A. to initiate such action, it certainly cleared up what had become an almost intolerable state of unreality.

After the first challenge there was an interval

of quiet. I had lived hitherto in rooms: in June I was married, and settled into a house near the college; and the joy and comfort of a home were all the more wonderful for the long time in which we had waited for it. Then in October the blow fell. The Master intimated that I had been appointed with full knowledge of his views and policy, and in accepting the post had done so without signifying any objection. And one of my colleagues told me that in fact the Master had been responsible for my selection against the wishes of the most definitely Christian members of the Governing Body. It was an illuminating discovery. The men who were my natural allies regarded me as the nominee of a sceptic; the Master suggested that I had been given charge of the pass in order to surrender it; both parties knew that I was liberal in views, and in any case was only five and twenty; both, and especially the Master, had been kind and friendly. In addition I had just taken on the responsibilities of a married man, had no money, and if I left Emmanuel in disgrace, no prospects. Here was a merry greeting on our return from our honeymoon. Only one course was possible. I wrote to the Master asking him, if he regarded my opposition as disloyal or as infringing the terms of my appointment, to let me place my resignation in his hands. He replied generously, but without a direct answer. For the next six months I carried two letters in my pocket, one resigning my fellowship, and the other to the then headmaster of Rugby applying for a mastership under him.

Those six months were, I think, the most trying of my life, and that because of their isolation and insecurity. Too heterodox for the Christians, too orthodox for their critics, committed both by conviction and by office to conflict for the faith, yet attracted by the Master's personal charm and sympathising with his sincerity and courage, I had been responsible for the declaration of war, and had as best I could to carry it through. Had I been still unmarried a term of it would have broken me. Even as it was by March I was racked with neuritis and insomnia. When the Master died suddenly during the vacation I felt that he had only finished first by a short span.

This tale of ancient woes has been re-told because, like all such times in our lives, it had an influence proportionate to its unpleasantness. For good or evil my attitude towards life, and especially towards the church, was formed during those eighteen months. Most people have, at some time or another, to stand alone and to suffer, and their final shape is determined by their response to their probation ; they emerge either the slaves of circumstance or in some sense captains of their souls. And for everyone it is good to live dangerously, to have to take risks with all that they value most, to go from day to day without taking long views, and to resist the easy escape of compromise or attachment to a crowd. Probably the real ground for Christ's tremendous denunciation of riches is not that wealth is in itself wrong, but that a comfortable present, an assured future, and the support of convention and popularity are more devastating to spiritual life than any hardships or

almost any vices. It is so easy, especially for the public school and university type of man, to regard respectability as a virtue and to mistake moral cowardice for sportsmanship. We can all shout with the crowd and play up for the team ; the test comes, as many of us found out in France, when we are alone and under fire.

The power to ride loose to life, which is the secret of all romance, can, I think, be learnt in two ways. We can discover it, as we did in the war, by being plunged into circumstances that challenge all our sanctions and overthrow all our safeguards. War is apocalyptic ; things happen in it—things unforeseen, incalculable, tremendous; the basis of assumptions on which we have built our careers crumbles beneath us ; the fixed lights of fame by which we have estimated our success fall from the firmament ; the earth to which we are bound is shattered, and we must either share its ruin or be brave enough to go free and unsupported. But there is a second road to romance. We can find it, not by discovering that our safety is an illusion, but by knowing God and living eternally. The early Christians, until they had begun to make terms with the world and settle down in it, had upon them the glamour and gaiety of spiritual freedom. Life was intense and thrilling, just because it was an episode. Pain and fear could not daunt them, for they had nothing to be afraid of, nothing that suffering could touch. Courage is easy for those who have no thought for themselves ; danger is exhilarating when there is Jesus beside you ; love laughs at death when it is God who loves and is loved. If the true goal of

the Christian life is to be able to say sincerely 'May my name perish, so thy kingdom come,' then to be taught by a long and lonely test at once one's own weakness and the amazing adequacy of Christ is a phase of discipleship infinitely worth while.

Moreover, for an age like our own in which both the mass production of modern industry and the analytical methods of the scientists tend to treat men as if they were machines, it is difficult to keep alive the sense of adventure, or to hold fast the quest of those ends which alone make existence valuable. Men come to feel that the world is orderly and reliable, and so to accept and conform to a routine of behaviour. Habits become stereotyped, reactions become reflex, the man settles down into a groove, and only asks to remain in it undisturbed. The permanence of the *status quo* is taken for granted; any attempt to question it is a blasphemy, or to alter it a revolution. Progress is automatic and slow, a vast impersonal movement for which the individual has no responsibility; his business is to make the best for himself of things as he finds them, not to bother to make them better. He will have his moments of bitterness, when he feels caught up in the grip of ruthless forces that are imprisoning and strangling him; and his moments of doubt when the creed of eating and drinking and making money, of thrift and respectability, looks the dingy thing that it is; and his moments of revolt, when only cowardice and the ingrained conventions which he mistakes for principles prevent him from breaking loose. But on the whole he settles down to a

mechanical discharge of such duties as his state lays upon him, asking only for relief from the discomfort of change or the excitement of struggle, and satisfying such elements of adventure as he cannot wholly exterminate by a flutter on the turf or enthusiasm over a game of golf. They find security in wealth which they ought to find in God. Jesus summed up the peculiar peril of our age in the parable of the Rich Fool.

It is one of the ironies of history that the church of which Jesus is the head should have become the advocate and example of a static respectability, and its clergy the type of all that is conventional. The contrast between Him and them in this matter is deplorable, but its cause is easy to understand. Religion claims, and rightly, to be concerned with the eternal; its doctrines are in fact hypotheses to interpret what is in itself infinite; but it is easy, as every scientist knows, to identify a hypothesis with a law, and to regard it as no less certain than the facts which it has been propounded to explain. The truth of God is changeless: the Nicene Creed is the truth of God; the Nicene Creed is changeless. God's Word is infallible; the Bible is God's Word; the Bible is infallible. How easily we slip into such syllogisms. And when once the first step has been taken, the process can be extended to include a similar claim for everything that belongs to religion. Salvation becomes conditioned by an iota; faith is transformed into obedience; adventure is a vice not a virtue.

All this is sufficiently commonplace, and is only stated here because it is this contrast between life

and machinery, between the religion of Jesus and the mechanisms of orthodox Christianity that is the cause of the spiritual unrest of our age. Just as in industrialism the primary motive of agitation for reform is not the desire for better wages or shorter hours, but the protest of men and women against being treated as robots, so in religion the problem is not how to deal with particular details like the historicity of Genesis or of the Virgin Birth, but how to get rid of a system built up upon an inadequate idea of the nature of God. It may be that we can only reform the whole by a gradual reconstruction of its parts: that is the method of nearly all churchmen. But there are some of us who believe that until we recognise and concentrate upon the fundamental issues we shall deal in palliatives and produce patchwork.

That the changes demanded by the scientific movement were not recognised by Christians twenty years ago will hardly be disputed: their scope is even now absurdly misconceived. It is not a question of a few specious glosses upon certain articles of the creed, or a mild revision of the forms of service, or a relaxation here and there of the traditional discipline. If any of us suppose that we can meet the demands of the new age by reading the Revised Version, or re-writing the State Prayers, or dropping the Athanasian Creed, or sanctioning Reservation, or allowing prayers for the dead, we are living in a world of illusion. We want more than an Enabling Act and a Deposited Prayer-book and a Doctrinal Commission. These things are desirable enough, and will be useful just so far as they are dictated by knowledge

rather of the splendour of the new than of the defects of the old. As it is they are largely the work of men who assume that the main characteristics of institutional religion stand irreformable and all that is necessary is to fit a few of the more obvious discoveries into the fabric of the existing structure. Scientists revolutionise traction by the invention of the petrol-engine, and in a few years motor-cars and aeroplanes are evolved for it to drive. The church hears of the invention, gets rid of the horses from the family coach, fits an engine to it, and fails to realise that the old body and wheels, even if set in motion, will be shaken to pieces in a mile or two. The coach was good in its day: the purpose of coach or car or plane is the same, to carry passengers on their road; but given new motive power, a new type of vehicle is essential. And the difference between horses and a motor engine is not greater than that between the pre-scientific and the modern concept of God.

To define the difference it is only necessary to point to the fact that the old knowledge was reached by deduction from certain external authorities whose validity was assumed, and that God Himself was conceived as the supreme source and sanction of these authorities. He was the sultan, they His ministers sending out decrees from a supernatural realm to which man's intellect could not aspire nor his criteria of judgment apply. Nowadays we must start from the data furnished by science, history, and experience, observing the world, the records of mankind, and our own personal and corporate lives, testing and comparing the results, and forming hypotheses to cover and

explain them. For us God is manifested always and everywhere, the fullness of the manifestation being determined by the quality of the medium by which it is given. We can learn something from the flower in a crannied wall, more from knowledge of our own physiology and psychology, more still from the men of large heart, sound intellect and moral worth, most from Jesus, the full-grown Son of Man. But we cannot rule out any data as ' merely materialistic ' or ' merely natural.' And none of them will give us a result which we are justified in describing as inerrant or absolute.

Now most of our leading churchmen would, I suppose, admit that they adopted the second rather than the first of these methods. The trouble with them, as with the rest of us, is that in a time of change we can hardly avoid taking over large slabs of unassimilated archaisms. We may maintain, for example, that the religious worth of a particular document will depend upon the character of its author, his knowledge of God, his sense of values, his power of expression, rather than upon the epoch in which he lived or the endorsement of his work by tradition. We may admit that St. Francis was more fully inspired than Habakkuk, and the record of Christian missions more edifying than that of the Kings of Israel. Yet it is assumed as axiomatic that an Old Testament lesson must form part of the church's office, and a proposal to read Thomas à Kempis or Robert Browning would be treated as a joke or a blasphemy. We still recite the psalter, and the Ten Commandments, though many of the psalms outrage the whole content of our Lord's teaching, and the

decalogue represents an ethic from which St. Paul strove in agony to set us free. And anyone who examines the revised Prayer-book will see that it not only retains but introduces ideas about God, about sin, atonement, inspiration and the church, which presuppose the old age and are indefensible in the new.

It is this need for a radical change in our whole outlook, involving as it does the re-examination of the complete system of theology and organisation, that sometimes makes the task of the churchman of to-day seem hopeless. So vast it is, and so urgent: and there are seemingly so few who realise it and are then prepared to give themselves to it. And whenever a move towards drastic reform is set on foot, some practical person arises and says that what is wanted is a change in the management of parochial finance, or a scheme for the building of new churches, or an enrichment of eucharistic ceremonial, or a recognition of the nearness of the Second Advent; and the reformers rush off on a whirlwind campaign to advocate or denounce the proposal. And the small number who remain faithful to the larger venture either find themselves ostracised by the church and its press as heretics, or made bishops and compelled to spend their lives in administering the established order. The reform will come: that is as certain as the passage of time. The educated layman has long ago moved into the new world, but in doing so he has usually left the church and often Christianity: for he has taken it for granted that Christ belongs to the old order. He is not to be won either by half-hearted

concessions or by the apologetic which would show that science and orthodoxy occupy different regions and can be made compatible by mutual forbearance. He says in effect 'Face the facts and all the facts. Here is the universe as we know it to-day. It leaves no room for infallibilities, for a barrier between natural and supernatural, for intrusions *ab extra*, for creation as an act, for the doctrine of the Fall, for mythology and superstition, magic and priestcraft, and a *Deus ex machina*. You must see whether it leaves room for Jesus Christ. If He is what the traditional orthodoxy teaches, it does not.' All the time, despite his aggressiveness, he wants God, wants Jesus, wants to be able to make sense of the world without sacrificing either his religious instincts or his intellectual honesty. And when he is winning his way through to a reasonable faith, some one exhorts him to be baptised, and he reads the Anglican service of Holy Baptism, and is shocked back into apostasy.

It was this situation which those months of crisis at Emmanuel revealed to me—vaguely at first, because my experience of Jesus emphasised for me the difference between Christian and non-Christian, and then more clearly as I found myself in a position which, but for the fact of Christ, was nearer to the critics than to the orthodox. The general premisses from which we started, the line of argument by which we reached a conclusion, the sort of evidence that satisfied us, even the criticisms which we both passed upon tradition—in all of these I was at home with the heretics and anathema to the devout. Only the reality and

significance of Jesus meant everything to me and nothing to them; and there too, if they had been able to dissociate Him from the ecclesiastical system, they would have been slow to reject Him. As it was they enabled me to detect and get rid of many remnants of the old outlook, to discover how much of what is credited as Christian is in fact accretion upon the gospel and even inconsistent with it, and to adopt once and for all an uncompromising belief in the grandeur of the 'New Reformation' and a conviction that my chief job in life was to work for it. Often both then and later I wondered whether the change could ever come without violent upheaval and schism; often it seemed as if the new wine must needs burst the old bottles; but for me it was made clear then and thenceforward that so long as the church would allow me to retain my position in its ministry, my business was to strive for reform by consent and from within.

It was at first a very lonely struggle, for there was no group of churchmen in Cambridge or elsewhere that I had the right conscientiously to join. My natural allies were the Liberal Evangelicals, then just initiating the Group Movement: my college was of their colour, and most of my friends belonged to them. But they were naturally so anxious not to offend or lose touch with the old evangelical tradition that to join them would have meant accepting a phraseology and preconceptions which I could not sincerely adopt. They are more liberal now; but still, I think, too much occupied in looking back to the paths that they have left behind to make much progress in striking out new trails;

one cannot walk straight unless one looks forward and not backward. The Churchmen's Union was not then strong in Cambridge and hardly came into my life. From what I read of it, I concluded that it was mainly occupied in fighting over again the battles of the last century, when the question of miracles, of the Virgin Birth and the Physical Resurrection was in the centre of the field. Neither of these supposedly crucial issues has ever worried me, or seemed really important. Both are matters on which the evidence is admittedly precarious and which have no serious bearing upon the religious value or personal quality or living efficacy of Jesus. Both if accepted can be so used as to destroy essential elements in the gospel—the Virgin Birth to overthrow the true Manhood of Jesus by removing Him from our species, and the Bodily Resurrection to locate Him in some extra-terrestrial heaven, 'it being against the truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one,' and thus to deny His presence where two or three are gathered together. The doctrine of the Incarnation does not depend upon the manner of His birth but upon the character of Him who was born; the doctrine of His risen life is unaffected whether or no the tomb was empty. At the same time the evidence for them seems to me stronger than it does to many Modernists, and they are therefore issues on which I have neither the need nor the desire to dogmatise. Hence those for whom they were of vital interest did not touch the roots of my problem. Negatives did not matter. If people were genuinely able to believe in the

Church of Rome or the infallibility of Scripture, it was not my business to attack them, first because such attacks only produce bitterness and a hardening of the defence, and secondly because the effort to construct a positive belief was both more absorbing and more important. There is little prospect of getting rid of error except by the discovery of new truth; there is little good in overthrowing inadequate creeds until we are sure that their worth has been preserved in that which shall take their place. Modernists on the whole have failed because they are at once too academic and too destructive; it is not true that 'they have no gospel,' but in 1910 their gospel was neither clear nor inspiring. They had not yet secured a definite place in the Church of England, were relatively few, and on the defensive; and as such their policy was to attack. For their heroism during the whole of the last half century no gratitude can be sufficient. Their efforts have saved the church. If I had seen more of them, I should have joined them earlier. As it was, I had to stand as best I could alone.

Such a position means inevitably that one's work is largely ineffective, and that much of it is wasted. Where the ground to be covered is so immense, we can only hope to make rapid progress by collective effort and the pooling of results. In those years I spent weeks of labour exploring problems already satisfactorily solved, rediscovering orthodoxy, or following blind alleys. Wider knowledge or expert advisers would have saved me many a fruitless quest, and the stimulus of keener minds and riper learning would have perhaps

enabled me to do something less unworthy. Looking back I can see how sadly I failed as a scholar, how hopeless it is for me to contribute to the task set before me. Failure is writ large over my work; and if the reason is partly my own incompetence, it is partly my isolation from other workers.

Yet if much of my labour was in vain, and all of it unsatisfactory, the effort to win through alone is not without its compensations. Even when one at last works out, say, a theory of the Atonement only to find that it has been done far more adequately and along the same lines by another, the time has not been altogether wasted. 'A poor thing, but mine own,' is perhaps more real to us than a fine thing but borrowed. To set out, as Mr. Chesterton has it, on a voyage of adventure and to land at Brighton, is to feel for Brighton a close and personal affection; it is to make it a possession for ever. To prove, after years of study, that Apollinarius was wrong when you started by believing, and desiring to believe, that he was right, is to understand him far more intimately than if you have accepted his condemnation from the text-books. Research and independent enquiry are good for the soul, even if they produce no startling novelty as a result. What you hold, even if it is the merest truism, becomes precious when you have found out why you hold it. And of all the fascinating pursuits in the world is there any more absorbing than the quest of the knowledge of God?

Therein lies the joy of this task of ours. It is the search for the horizon, and I have not the

power to move far towards it. Stumbling along, often losing the road, often wandering at large, often tripped up and bruised and shaken, I have yet my little moments when a new piece of country opens up ahead. Always the goal is afar, always unattainable. Now the journey lies along the path of history and the tracing out of the footsteps of the great; now nature guides me through jungles of unfamiliar aspect and fearsome hills of difficulty; now it is by social study or the evidence of psychic experience that the track must be pursued. Yet always when the trails fade out and all seems lost, there are glimpses of the royal way where Jesus beckons on His brothers. In the end all roads honestly followed lead to God: of that I am very sure. In the end no unselfish effort is wasted, irrelevant or mistaken though it appear. Meanwhile there is the joy of the road, and the zest of adventure, and the lesson that turns failure into bliss, the lesson that the Master is always near, and that when we will we can take Him by the hand. And as we travel we become aware of other footsteps than our own, and the path that seemed so desolate is filled with good comrades, and the would-be pioneer is humbled and gladdened to find that all humanity is marching beside him.

V. QUO VADIS?

'Allons! to that which is endless.'

Those years at Cambridge before the War marked my 'coming-of-age.' It is an event that cannot be assigned to a particular year; and if it be true that man's supremacy over the apes is due to the length of his childhood, we shall not desire the process to be hastened. The effort to speed up religious development and impose final forms of belief upon adolescents seems to me always dangerous and usually mistaken. How can one who has known nothing of the great experiences of life, nothing of struggle and suffering, of death, of love and parenthood, enter into the fullness of religion? What does a child who has no acquaintance with the mystery of iniquity and is only conscious of a desire to do its best, know about the Cross? Is it really wise or right to expect the immature to understand the growth of moral and spiritual ideals recorded in the Bible, or to appreciate either the difficulties or the grandeur of Christ's thought and life? We do not expect the boy or girl to develop unaided or at once a full-grown fitness for its earthly citizenship: is it fair to expect that it will more easily fulfil the whole

demand of its citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven? And in the attempt to bring it prematurely to the knowledge of God may we not create and foster either a dislike of all religion or the substitution of a system of taboos and repressions, myths and superstitions, conventions and dogmas for the freedom of a living faith? The young have a natural awe and wonder at the majesty of the world, a native sense of worship, an inborn desire for love and joy: help them quite simply to associate this at all times and in all places with God, our Father. They soon attain a passion for hero-worship: help them to feel the splendour of the historic Jesus, and let them discover Him not as a quasi-mythical and supernatural Being but as the Son of Man, the greatest creative personality in history, the supreme poet and adventurer and friend. They are full of comradeship, of delight in beauty, of curiosity and the wish to know, of dreams and ideals and a passion to live well: help them to see in all the friendliness of nature and man, in all clean play and honest work the Spirit of God and of His Christ. Religion is so universal a thing, so completely the satisfaction of the whole personality, at once so intimately part of every moment of existence and so vastly transcending our noblest efforts to define it, that we cannot reduce it to a matter of accepting creeds, and setting apart certain times and places for God, and breaking up life into secular and sacred. God should be as natural to us as the light, Jesus as real as our friends, the Spirit recognised and confessed in every scrap of beauty and truth and

goodness. Let us make much of special times for prayer and thought and worship, for sacraments and the church; but let us be very sure that these are means not ends, and means to enable us to discover that in God we live and move and have our being, that in Him all things consist, that all things everywhere testify to Him, and in Him come to their perfection. And if they fail to do this, let us dispense with them.

Coming of age meant for me the ordering of my thought and activity in a scheme that depended upon the two discoveries (if I may call them so) to which my quest had led. It marked the end of the phase of sheer experiment, of fragmentary and almost unguided adventure, when one was trying, rather at random, to make sense of life and find a permanent objective. Since then circumstances have put me in a variety of occupations: as schoolmaster, as army chaplain, as journalist, as country parson, as social student, as field-naturalist, as lecturer, as author, I have collected a diversity of impressions of the ways of the world. The joy of God has come to me most vividly in my class-room at Tonbridge, in the trenches in front of La Bassée, in the horror and excitement of the battle of Cambrai, in the Lodge of Oddfellows at Bletchingley, in a compositors' room in Fleet Street, in a garden at Tatsfield, at a harrier's nest in Texel, at the Sunday evening services in Liverpool Cathedral, among a group of Communist dockers, and above all at a gathering of Women Pilgrims at St. Augustine's, Canterbury. Its abode is always in my home; it is my wife and children who never fail to make life sweet

and sane, good and gay and godly; and they do it because they are not in the ordinary sense of the word in the least religious.

The two discoveries that have arranged this chaos in a pattern can be variously described. They are first the reality and then the universality of Jesus; first the incarnation in Jesus, then the incarnation in the universe; first the discovery of the religion of Jesus, then the discovery that this religion contains and explains, consummates and unifies the whole upward movement of nature and mankind; first the experience of the power of His love to save, then the knowledge that in a myriad shapes, often frustrated, often denied, always imperfectly apprehended, that love is the energy and life of the world. It is not my business here to attempt a full account of the scheme of thought that is involved for me in these convictions. I have tried to set it out in a variety of books and articles and speeches, and if they have failed to explain it I am not likely to succeed here. But certain illustrations of the bearing of it upon life, and especially upon Christianity, may help to clear up the vagueness of a general statement.

And first as to the fact of Jesus. Enough has been said of the overwhelming conviction which the experience of His presence brought to me. That conviction has grown if not stronger at least more vivid with the years. It was during my first night in France on my way to Vimy Ridge in April 1917 that He vindicated for me my hope that when everything else failed He would stand sure. I am perhaps physically and certainly morally a coward; my wife knows it, whatever

others may suppose; and when death looked me in the face, my manhood withered and collapsed. For what seemed hours I was in an agony of fear. Men talk of honour and a flag—I would have forsworn any earthly loyalty for the bare gift of life; or of immortality when one yearns for the dear small familiar things of earth, and the clutch of a baby's fingers on one's hand, and the smile in a woman's eyes; or of sacrifice and heroism, fine themes for talk, but poor consolation if all one's dreams are to end in a shattered pulp of blood and brain; or of God—and suddenly as if spoken in the very room His words 'For their sakes I consecrate myself' and the fragrant splendour of His presence.

I was overwrought, no doubt. The day had been too great a strain. I had parted from my wife, crossed the Channel at its worst, and been greeted at St. Omer with singular discourtesy; the authorities had urged me to take a job at a hospital, and I had chosen to go straight to a battalion; it was all new and strange and lonesome. I hope my behaviour will never again be so abject. But when kind friends murmur 'reaction' or hint that tortured nerves play tricks with the imagination, I can only reply that neither of these comments is novel. May be, the visualising of the Lord was due to my mental state; may be, the words were my own rendering of His impact; but for the next nine months He was never absent, and I never alone, and never save for an instant or two broken by fear. If He who was with me when I was blown up by a shell, and gassed, and sniped at, with me in hours of bombardment and

the daily walk of death, was an illusion, then all that makes life worth living for me is illusion too; and I can only thank God that in this mockery of existence there has been a dream so beautiful, so realistic, so potent in its effects. There is no final and demonstrable certainty for any of us; we walk by faith, and hypothesis: I know the objections to my belief, and the likelihood that I misconceive the truth of it, but like everyone else I must examine and test and estimate probabilities, and then choose as best I can. And there are a few things so abundantly confirmed, so congruous to all that I know and do that of them I can say 'I am sure.' Jesus is of them all to me the most secure. And having chosen I find myself in the company of an exceeding great multitude of men and women of all nations and languages, ages and conditions, whose faith though it cannot determine must enormously reinforce and enlarge my own.

Since then my experience of Him has been less plainly externalised but more continuously felt. Then He stood out in contrast to all else, objective, other than myself or humanity, such as He was in the days of His flesh or in the experience on the road to Damascus. Now He is revealed more readily in and through others when in a friend, or in the ministry of some unknown man or woman, or in the faces and hands of the poor He makes himself known. Thus it is that a multitude of simple sacraments convey His real presence. I am watching a mother bird feeding her young, and the scene is linked up with Jesus and the sparrows, and His prayer for daily bread, and all the sacred mystery of spiritual food. My

lily bulbs at last break through the crust of earth, thrusting up a spike of rich brown that in a few days will be a plume of leaves, and Jesus is inevitably present as I consider how they grow. Or the children—can anyone go through the agony of fatherhood, the suspense and wonder of birth, and the long sweet weeks of their infancy, and not feel that Jesus is here with them? Poetry, fantasy, nothing but association and recollection? Are not these real and valid? Are such outward and visible signs not as authentic sacraments as absolution or the eucharist? Surely all good life is His life. Surely He was consecrating sacraments just as much when He bade us consider the lilies, or set a little child in the midst, as when He took bread and brake it and said 'This is my body.' There may be, there is, an added dignity attaching to what has been through the centuries the crowning sacrament; but if I, being unfit to enter into the riches of that supreme mystery, can feed my soul on the crumbs that fall elsewhere from His table, surely He is the same, and will not drive me from Him; and those whose growth in Him fits them to use higher means more worthily, need not despise, but should rather pity and encourage me. Some day perhaps I too shall find His fullness whole and complete in the Supper of the Lord. Meanwhile I cannot believe it to be right to magnify one special means, however august, by profaning all else.

Such an acknowledgment cannot but raise an issue of vital importance. It is plain that during the centuries of its history Christianity has tended to become not only highly organised but to

some extent fixed into a rigid structure of dogma and ritual. This has been a genuine evolution, the simple society of believers adjusting itself to the circumstances of its environment and developing new forms in order to discharge new functions. These forms originally plastic become stereotyped by habit, and have in some cases at least ceased to serve a useful purpose. Prayers which represent God's action as arbitrary and despotic, hymns that picture heaven as 'above the bright blue sky,' doctrines of atonement in which Jesus is offered to appease the wrath of the Father or of the sacraments clothed in the language of transubstantiation, were once appropriate when men expressed their highest thoughts in terms of a three-storey universe or a philosophy of substance and accidents. Those days are gone; to insist upon such formulæ is to identify Christianity with the old régime, and to invite modern folks to reject it. So radical and universal has been the change of outlook in the past century that the whole mode of the church's organised system has now to be examined and reshaped. Traditional usage, however reverend, does not guarantee that the inward life of religion is any longer adequately expressed in ordinances inherited from a previous age.

There is to-day a large and increasing number of sincerely religious minds which rejoice in the worship of God and the faith of Jesus Christ, but which cannot honestly feel that our present services and sacraments satisfy them. All of us must have known very many, young and old, who look sadly at our clergy, at our prayer-books and manuals of doctrine, and murmur 'Jesus I know and Paul I

know; but who are ye?' or when they have attended the services of the church are only struck by the contrast between it and the Gospels: their cry 'They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him' comes from the heart, and is worthy of a deeper sympathy than it usually receives.

For myself, enormously as I enjoy public worship, humbly grateful as I am to be a minister of the Church of England, there are times when its ordered services fail to meet my needs and strike me merely as archaic survivals of an older day. If my years of study have made me at all familiar with the ethos of the Gospels, I must admit that our creeds and liturgy often strike me as out of harmony with it. They have for many of my fellow Christians an appropriateness that I cannot feel, and though this may well argue only my own deficiencies it is at least a fact to be noted. There are elements in the story of the Last Supper which are for me more faithfully represented in a simple meal of Christian fellowship than in the pomp and splendour and awe of the Mass; and I must confess that the atmosphere of Catholic devotion often seems nearer to that of the Mystery Religions than of the Upper Room at Jerusalem. Jesus is the Lord of all good life; there is scope in His service for all that brings the wonder of God into the lives of men: but when the Mass is extolled as if attendance at it were the goal and sum of Christian endeavour, my sympathies go with those who can only say 'We have not so learned Christ.' To me it seems that His fullness can only be realised when all life becomes the expression and

instrument of His Spirit; and I want to go on discovering fresh sacraments day by day rather than to confine His presence to any limited scheme of outward and visible signs.

This raises my second discovery, that indeed nothing is common or unclean, that it is not our business to condemn and exclude but to acclaim and enjoy and befriend. The heretics at Emmanuel at least taught me this that it was useless to denounce and satirise any honest enquiry after truth—useless and wrong; for in doing so I was perchance crucifying Christ. Who after all am I, and what is my knowledge of God, that I should dare to cut off from Him or from myself any of His children? Am I so certain of His mind that I can usurp the right to judge another in pride? Is not my contempt just a flattering of my own conceit, a display of my own self-righteousness?

When I began my work at Cambridge, it was with a young man's impatience and the zeal of the neophyte, a passion for labelling my opponents and a habit of bitter speech. An undergraduate, meeting my brother but not realising his connection with me, when asked about the new Dean of Emmanuel, replied 'He's a sarcastic devil.' Brotherly wisdom passed on the remark, and I vowed then and there to keep my tongue severely bridled. God knows, I have often enough broken the pledge; indignation comes easily, and the power to wound with words is not an easy thing to lay aside. Like the knife, satire may perhaps be used for surgery when all other methods fail and the patient has grown callous to gentler

treatment. But to employ it to hurt not to heal can never be justified, and few of us are loving enough to employ it at all.

Having forsworn the method of rebuke there remained the attempt to understand. And to understand is to pity and to love. These men were mistaken in their philosophy of life; so I was convinced. But my own philosophy was not inerrant. We were both eager to discover: each must possess something which the other ought to know. Let us exchange ideas: perhaps they could get something from me, certainly I should get much from them. Gradually the desire to impose my own views gave way to a wish for joint exploration, and to a conviction that a man's opinions mattered less than his character, that God knew and loved him, and that it was my business rather to be content to fail than to browbeat or exploit, rather to keep fellowship than to break off relations. It was my business, but it was also my joy. You cannot rejoice in another if you are always reminding yourself, or him, that he does not go to church, and always seeking for an opportunity to say a word in season. You must be very good friends with a man before you can begin to change him, and even then your most effective influence will be unconscious. All this reviling of other people's sins, all this mechanical business of purveying religion to them, is too often based on the assumption that we are entitled to contrast ourselves with others to our own advantage and thank God that we are not as this publican. Whatever such a spirit may be, it is surely not that of Christ; and so long as the

church or its parties grow bitter in faction or behave as if they had vested rights in God, they are none of His. Selfishness, complacency, pride, this is the sin unto death, and the sectarian or the proselytiser is too often guilty of it.

Does this mean that there is no such thing as truth, or that we must compromise with our principles? Does it not matter what a man believes, and if we have convictions must we not give expression to them? There is evil in the world, monstrous lusts and cruelties, are we not bound to fight them to the death? Yes, but love is our message and our weapon. And God loves us all alike—or so Jesus said. And if God loves, how can I hate? Surely the whole life of God, as of Jesus, is one long agony of redemptive effort, that He may bring us to fullness of life in Himself. Surely if some of us have had larger opportunities or (if you dare say so) have made better use of them, we that are strong ought to bear the burdens of the weak, to sympathise and encourage. And often, when one finds a man whose views seem wholly mistaken, if he is treated as a friend, he reveals qualities of character for which one can only feel a reverent gratitude. One does not want to improve him, to remodel him after one's own likeness, to upbraid him for his mistakes, but only to know him and to love him and to share in common what each possesses.

Take a case in point, that of a Communist friend of mine. We met first at a course of lectures on Evolution, and after the first he got up and asked why the lecturer, being a clergyman, had said nothing about God. That broke the ice

of our mutual suspicion, and on subsequent occasions we came to know one another intimately. He is professedly a materialist; as such I believe his philosophy to be wrong, but then the philosophy of (say) a member of the Salvation Army or of the Church of Rome seems to me to be also wrong, if by wrong we mean wholly unable to explain the facts of life or to provide a reasonable account of the universe; and my own philosophy, though I believe it to be true, seems nevertheless wrong to many people far abler than I am. But, like many Salvationists or Romans, he is vastly bigger than his creed, indeed as different from it as he is from the Communist of caricature. Few men of my acquaintance are so Christ-like, so marked by suffering, so patient, so free from bitterness, so generous to those who for five years have persecuted him. Black-listed and deprived of any possible employment, imprisoned, driven from the country, forced to leave wife and children, never secure, almost starved, miserably clad, he yet speaks and thinks and acts like a Christian gentleman. And his only crime is that he cannot endure in silence the oppression and wastage, the demoralising insecurity and the soul-destroying squalor, in which his fellows have to live. For me to preach to such a man would be an impertinence; to put a barrier between him and me because Christianity has been associated in his mind with patronising charity and churches full of comfortable folk, would be to reinforce his misunderstanding. He is a bigger person than I am, opinions or no opinions; and that he is very near to God, I have no doubt at all. It is a pity that his views are so unsuited to his character: a

bad creed, even if it has no influence, is an obstacle. But to tell me that such a man is damned because he does not, professedly, believe in Christ, or rather in the church, is to judge him not by his quality but by his label. Jesus said 'by their fruits,' not by their certificate of baptism or their communicant status or by much repetition of 'Lord, Lord.' And like Mr. Sheppard, I have a feeling that Jesus is much more manifestly incarnate in this man and his kind than He is in me.

'And you a minister of the church, a Canon, a Doctor of Divinity!' Yes, I know how blasphemous it seems to those of the old era, for whom faith is belief in the creeds, and the Church of England is the Kingdom of God, and the Bible the only inspired literature, and the sacraments the only covenanted means of grace. And if the authorities of my church decide that such views as mine are intolerable within its boundaries, I shall of course, though it break my heart, resign my position in its service. But at present I cannot feel that I am a minister on sufferance or with apologies. Rather I believe with all my soul that it is this new outlook, far more clearly expressed and consistently followed than I can express or follow it, which the church exists to proclaim. Jesus, the perfect sacrament of God, Jesus the perfect expression and instrument of creative love, Jesus the perfect Man, the translation into terms of manhood of the Eternal Father, belongs to all mankind, as they share in their varying degrees in His Mind and Spirit. But that His life might be perpetuated and men brought into conscious relationship with Him, He banded together His

disciples into a community. Through the centuries that society has been evolved, adapting itself to its surroundings in order to preserve and spread abroad the good news of its Lord. Like an organism its form changes; new needs occasion new modes of action; and when the life is strong, old organs are atrophied or transformed as their use disappears. Here in this amazing century of discovery, a fresh environment has arisen. The whole aesthetic, intellectual, and moral standards of mankind have changed, the whole individual, social, and international way of life has altered. In the past such a revolution has inevitably been accompanied by proportionate movements in the religion of mankind; for it has involved a new and enriched understanding of God, a new illumination of the mind of Christ, a new opportunity for His Spirit. There have been in human history no developments in man's general outlook and habits so vast as those of the past century; it is unthinkable that they should not bring with them a development equivalently vast in the life and thought of the church. I may be wholly wrong in my interpretation of the new epoch in religion; that may well be; if so, my condemnation is just. But let no one suppose that the old way will survive unaltered, or that a little deft patchwork will suffice to save it. 'New wine must be put into new bottles.'

Meanwhile for me, in spite of its exclusiveness, its insistence upon orthodoxy, its bondage to the letter of Scripture and of tradition, its respectability and conservatism, the Church of England is the society at once best fitted to be God's agent

among our people, and nearest in outlook and desire to the mind of Christ. It has stood always for a reasonable faith, for tolerance of diverse opinions, for the right to revise and re-interpret, for the importance of sound learning. It has cast off allegiance to infallibilities, has held out hands of welcome (slowly and grudgingly, I confess) to the scientist and the social reformer, and has been on the whole a champion of liberty and education. In the last twenty years it has developed enormously; liberal views are characteristic of all the vital elements in its various parties; it is becoming conscious of a new unity and solidarity, and a new type of Anglican at once evangelical, modernist, and catholic is emerging. It has done more than any other denomination to promote the passage from the old order to the new, has been singularly generous to the impatient among its members in permitting experiments in doctrinal restatement and liturgical reform, and has received a mass of more or less friendly criticism with penitence and hope, acknowledging freely the measure of its failure and striving in spite of its connection with the State and the obscurantism of its extremists to set its house in order.

For one who believes with all his soul that in the religion of Jesus lies the solution of the riddle of the universe and the basis for a world-wide human brotherhood, it is sheer joy to share in the ministry of such a church. To have been alive at a time so critical, so fascinating, so pregnant with splendid possibilities is in itself a thing for which to be humbly thankful. To realise, as to-day we can, that mankind is indeed on the

march and that after the slow and desultory advance of many centuries a great step forward may now be taken, is to find a zest and excitement which make every day a romance. To believe not merely that human society might be recast nearer to the heart's desire, but that God's eternal purpose, revealed in the whole process of evolution and supremely in Christ Jesus, is coming to its fulfilment, is to find at once an infinite scope for service and an infinite inspiration to serve. In face of issues so tremendous and a calling so sublime what matter the little worries, the small fears and ambitions, that beset the self. Christ stands sure, His Kingdom comes, in all the world His Spirit manifests Him. We have only to lift up our eyes and we shall see here and now the King in His glory.

In the attainment of that vision each one of us repeats in some sense the movement of the whole creative process. He begins as one of a simple community, his family, intimately bound up with and dependent upon his kin, and accepting their outlook and habits without criticism or responsibility. Then in the long and often painful period of youth he must develop self-hood, learning to form his own opinions, control his environment, and endure loneliness. Finally he can regain fellowship, as he transcends his individuality by entering into free partnership with others, receiving and imparting in the give-and-take of their mutual association what each has to offer of talents or experience. We gain possession of our souls in order to lose them in love and service; and so losing them we enter into the richer life of the

blessed community whose nature is that of the Body of Christ and whose name is the Kingdom of Heaven—a Body with many members, a Kingdom without frontier.

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